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READINGS
FOR THE
SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS
OF THE
CHURCH'S YEAR.

By the Author of
APOSTLES' DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP

First Series.

SECOND EDITION.

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P R E F A C E.

THE object of this work is explained in the concluding paragraph of the Introduction.

I am indebted to two friends for the Readings on "The changing of the water into wine" and on "The temptation of our Lord" respectively. For the rest of the volume I am myself solely responsible. In so varied a collection, ranging over such a wide range of subject, it is hardly likely that everything should commend itself to every mind, even though the convictions of the reader and of the writer be truly one. If it should be so in any instance, I can only ask that it may be overlooked for the sake of the pervading harmony of the whole series of Readings with the faith and hope of the Church, as revived and restored to us in these last days.

RICHARD HUGHES.

1874

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READINGS

FOR

SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS.

Introduction.

THE following Readings are "for the Sundays and Holy Days of the Church's Year." It may be well to premise a few preliminary considerations as to what the Church's Year is, and how her Holy Days and Seasons should be ordered.

The Church's Year is so called, as distinguished from the World's Year. Both are of the same length, and take their measure alike from the time of the earth's revolution round the sun. Both consist of a recurring cycle of events. But the kind of events in the two is very different. The World's Year is made up of the changes of the seasons, and the various modes of life and occupation which these bring. The Church's Year is a series of *commemorations*; and her changes are in the thoughts and feelings which these in their turn are calculated to excite.

The observance of anniversaries, and the solemnizing them by fast or festival, is a practice universal among mankind. It has its root in family life, where he is cold indeed who refuses to join in the keeping of the wedding-day and the birth-day. It is seen in national life, when any event in the people's history has been of vital import—as when the Americans celebrate every

Fourth of July, their Declaration of Independence. But it is especially in the religious sphere of human existence that we find the keeping of days and seasons ~~so~~ universal and instinctive. There is no ancient religion—whether of East or West, Egypt or India, Greece or Rome—in which sacred feasts of annual recurrence did not form a part of the ecclesiastical system. The Scriptures moreover show that the Divinely-given worship of the Hebrews formed no exception to the rule. The worshipper of the Tabernacle or Temple passed every year through a series of observances, commemorative, celebrative, or anticipative, given him by Jehovah Himself for his blessing.

It might have been thought that this Divine sanction of a universal practice would have been sufficient; and that when the Christian Church grew into the keeping of certain holy days and seasons proper to her own case, such growth would have been felt to be a legitimate development of her heavenly life. But these very Jewish ordinances which have been referred to as Divine sanctions for the practice are felt by some to militate against it for Christian people. They were part, it is said, of the types and shadows of the ceremonial Law, which in Christ is fulfilled and done away. The spiritual realities which they represent, and not any counterpart of the ordinances themselves, are to be seen in the Church. And in support of this position certain passages are cited from St. Paul's Epistles: as where he writes to the Galatians—"How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years,"* and to the Colossians—"Let no

man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ."

Now it should be sufficient for those who argue thus to point out that among the "days" whose observance is commanded by Moses and (as they say) stigmatized by St. Paul is the *Sabbath*. It comes first in the list of the Hebrew festivals given in Leviticus, ¹ and as one of the series: it is instanced, with the feast of the new moon, among the "shadows of things to come" to the Colossians. Yet these very persons not only unite with the Church at large in observing the Lord's Day, but transfer to it the Divine institution and moral obligation which belonged to the Sabbath, which is thus to them no part of the shadow, but rather of the body which is of Christ. Surely if any are transgressing St. Paul's admonitions, it is they. It is futile to say that the Apostle means the Jewish seventh-day sabbath, and says nothing of the "Christian Sabbath" on the first day. He is indeed speaking of Jewish things throughout; but his language is general, and strikes—so far as it goes—at the keeping of any holy day whatever. His complaint against the Galatians is—"Ye observe days." And he writes to the Romans— "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."²

If, then, St. Paul's words are to be understood as forbidding to the Church any festivals or sacred seasons,

* Col. ii. 16, 17.

† Ch. xxiii.

‡ Rom. xiv. 5, 6.

and especially such as were appointed in the Law of Moses, she must begin by expunging the Lord's Day from her calendar. But as none would more strenuously object to this step than the persons we have in view, we may fairly ask them to reconsider their argument. What is it that the Apostle is condemning? Plainly the reckoning the positive ordinances of the Law as matters of moral obligation on Christians, whether as regards imposing them on oneself, or as judging others concerning them. This it is against which he inveighs. Stand fast, he says, in the liberty with which Christ has made you free; and be not subject again to any yoke of bondage. Judge no man, and let no man judge you, in the matter of meats or days. Let every day be holy to the Lord; and whatever you eat or drink, do it to His glory. These are the principles laid down by St. Paul. He feels nothing inconsistent with them in his condemnation of eating meats sacrificed to idols, or in his sharing in the special observance of the first day of the week.[†] Just as readily, were he once more to appear in the Church, would he fall in with her regular annual observances; and would deal with those who despised them as he did with those who partook of the idol-feasts.[†] "We know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

The truth is that the holy days and seasons of the Law stand with regard to the Church of Christ on the same footing as the whole service of the Tabernacle. The Church does not copy the Mosiac rites in her worship; but the forms in which the Holy Ghost expresses the mind of Christ within her are necessarily

* 1 Cor. x. † Acts xx. 7.—comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. ‡ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

analogous to the types of that mind in the old Law. And so of sabbath days and new moons and continual feasts—they “are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.” If the shadow has been cast behind by the body, the form of the body must correspond with the shadow. It must be with other holy days as with the Sabbath. From the beginning a Divine instinct led the Church to solemnize in a special manner the weekly anniversary of the Lord’s resurrection. By the end of the Apostolic Age the first day of the week had become known as “the Lord’s Day.” The Sabbath had disappeared, but all that was eternal in the old institution lived again in the Christian holy day: while the relations of the latter with the past Resurrection and the future renewing of all things shewed that its apparently fortuitous appointment was guided by Divine Providence, and had its root in the eternal realities.* In like manner the Church has been led into the observance of a certain course of holy seasons. She has grown into them by degrees; and we know not that in their appointment she has had before her any definite scheme or plan. But the result has been an order beautiful exceedingly in itself, and corresponding with the Jewish ecclesiastical year as closely as the Lord’s Day with the Sabbath. It is impossible to doubt that such an order, at least in its main outline, has proceeded from that Eternal Spirit who ever lives in the Church, which is His Temple.

Let us now look at the Church’s Calendar throughout the world. It begins with a commemoration of our Lord’s Nativity (Christmas), preceded by a season of preparation for the same, called Advent. Then

* See Introduction to Second Series.

certain days are devoted to the memory of the recorded events of the Infancy, as the Circumcision, the adoration of the Magi (Epiphany), the massacre of the Innocents, and the Presentation in the Temple. A few unmarked weeks succeed: and then, after another season of penitential preparation (Lent), we come to the days sacred to the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of the Lord Jesus. Finally, the giving of the Holy Ghost as on the Day of Pentecost receives solemn commemoration. Then there stretches on a long series of weeks, bare of the celebration of any anniversary, until the Advent Season once more breaks in to herald the approaching Christmas.

We have said nothing about the festivals of saints and martyrs. These vary in different calendars, and are scattered indiscriminately throughout the ecclesiastical year. But, looking at the outline here sketched, what is the picture presented to our eyes? It is surely a miniature copy of the whole New Testament dispensation. From Christmas to Ascension we follow the history of the holy Gospels. In Advent we have a hint of the ministry of the Lord's forerunner, the Baptist. When Christmas Day has celebrated His birth into the world, we count eight days and remember His Circumcision, and again forty days and think of His Presentation in the Temple. The unmarked weeks which follow stand for His life and ministry upon earth. From Palm Sunday onwards to Ascension we mark His history day by day; remembering the entry into Jerusalem, the institution of the Eucharist, the Passion and Death, the Burial, and the glorious Resurrection, each on the day of its occurrence, and allowing here as there the lapse of forty days ere we see Him ascending to His Father. Now the narrative

INTRODUCTION.

of the Acts takes up the wondrous tale; and ten days after the Ascension we keep the Feast of Pentecost. Last, what means this long succession of weeks which runs on to Advent? Just this, that when the work of Christ was finished, and the Holy Ghost had been given, there was nothing for the Church but to grow into the perfect man, and to occupy till her Lord came. The weeks after Pentecost represent the course of this dispensation from the giving of the Holy Ghost to the Second Advent. They picture the life-time of the Church, as the weeks from Christmas to Palm Sunday stand for the life-time of the Saviour. They are the period during which the Acts of Apostles bear fruit, and the epistles of Apostles receive their practical fulfilment. But before the New Testament canon ends, we have the Book of Revelation, whose key-note and burden is—"Behold! He cometh quickly." And so the ecclesiastical year ends as it began in the Advent Season, which prepares for the coming of the Lord, pointing to a corresponding work of heralding and making ready at the close of the Christian Age.

So far we have traced the relation of the Church's Year to the Christian dispensation, and to the Scriptures of the New Testament. To see it as the spiritual reproduction of the feasts of Israel, we must recall what these were.

The time of the moveable feasts of the Hebrew year was fixed by the occurrence of the Passover; and the day of the celebration of this feast depended upon the changes of the moon, as does our Easter. The month in which it came was called, ecclesiastically, the first month. Two days after the Passover, during the feast of unleavened bread, there was presented to the Lord a sheaf of the first-fruits of the produce of the land.

Fifty days after this came the Feast of 'Weeks, or Pentecost; on which two leavened loaves, made from the wheat of the commencing harvest, were offered in the sanctuary. This sequence of events terminated in the Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated the complete ingathering of all the fruits of the earth. But before this feast the civil year had commenced,—its first month being the seventh of the ecclesiastical calendar. This month was inaugurated by the blowing of trumpets in great solemnity; and on its tenth day was observed the chief fast of Israel, the Day of Atonement.

Now it cannot be doubted that the Passover and the following waving of the barley-sheaf typified the death and resurrection of the Lord—"Christ our Passover," "Christ the first-fruits"; and find therefore their Christian analogues in Good Friday and Easter Day. Nor is it less certain that the coming of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost is as significant as our Lord's dying with the Paschal lamb and rising again with the presenting of the barley-sheaf. As He in His resurrection was the first-fruits of the New Creation, so they on whom the Spirit fell at Pentecost became another instalment—so to speak—of the harvest of the earth. They were begotten by the word of truth, that they might be a kind of first-fruits of God's creatures: leavened loaves, indeed; still in mortal flesh: not, like the Passover sheaf, unleavened. And now the Feast of Tabernacles can mean nothing else, but that full ingathering of the saints and that utter destruction of the wicked—the harvest and vintage of the Apocalypset—which shall take place at the coming of the Lord. The Feast of Trumpets speaks of the heralding of His approach; and

the Day of Atonement of the "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Advent and Christmas correspond here; but Advent and Christmas as terminating the period which Passiontide and Easter and Pentecost have inaugurated. Perhaps the fact of this ~~seventh~~ month of the ecclesiastical being the first of the civil year gives it the same double aspect which we have seen in the Christian Advent season; and the Feast of Tabernacles becomes also significant of the Incarnation we celebrate at Christmas, when the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us.

Thus the Church's Calendar is no mere invention of man, no arbitrary arrangement of suitable anniversaries, but one of the perfect things of God. It images the whole course and work of redemption from the Nativity to the Second Advent. it runs parallel with the New Testament Scriptures and in it the sacred year of Israel lives again after a spiritual manner. And its practical value is no less certain than its Divine origin. It is a *Via Sacra*, a road of commemorations of all that belongs to the City of God. To him who rightly treads it the great facts of the Christian economy are ever becoming more familiar. He is never suffered to forget or let them slip; but their every annual celebration serves to deepen faith, and widen knowledge, and quicken hope and love concerning them. Truly they know not what pleasure and profit they have lost, who have given up the keeping of the feasts of the Lord.

We claim, then, for the Church's Year a Divine origin and constitution. We believe it to be of God

* See Tabular View on next page.

that everywhere in Christendom the Church observes her Christmas and Easter and Pentecost, with the lesser holy days and seasons which hang upon or grow out of them. But the selection and ordering of these latter, and the

CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.	NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.	THE CHURCH'S YEAR	HEBREW YEAR.
Nativity.		Advent. Christmas.	
Life of our Lord.	The Gospels.	Unmarked Weeks.	
His death. ,, resurrection ,, ascension.		Good Friday Easter Day. Ascension Day.	Passover Sheaf of first-fruits.
The Giving of the Holy Ghost.		Whitsuntide.	Pentecost.
Life of the Church	The Acts and Epistles.	Unmarked Weeks.	
ending with			
Preparation for	Revelation.	Advent	{ Feast of Trumpets. Day of Atonement.
Second Advent.		Christmas.	Feast of Tabernacles.

mode in which all are kept, are things of human arrangement, and differ in the several sections of the Church. It is proposed to review the Christian Year, as it is

(I.) described in Calendar, and (II.) embodied in Liturgy by the Greek, Roman and Anglican Communions; and as it has been given to us by the Apostles whom the Lord has restored in these last days.

I. 1. The Christian dispensation and the New Testament canon begin with that blessed event, the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the Roman and English Calendars commence with Christmas Day, —the season of Advent being (in this aspect) preparatory thereto. With such practice our own agrees. The Greek Church presents a singular variation here. She has no Advent: and her Christmas comes in towards the end of the long course of the weeks after Pentecost. This arrangement cannot be commended, if the Church's Year is to represent the Christian dispensation. But it exhibits a curious analogy with the course of the Hebrew Calendar; where the Feasts of Trumpets and of Tabernacles, which correspond with Advent and Christmas, occurred at the end of the ecclesiastical year.

There are certain events of our Lord's infancy which the Church has been led to observe in connexion with the Feast of the Nativity. All Calendars make mention of the Circumcision on the eighth day, and of the Presentation in the Temple on the fortieth day after Christmas. The Greek Church commemorates also on January 6th the visit of the wise men from the East, under the title of Theophany or Epiphany: and the Roman and English Calendars, agreeing with her in this, contain besides a day of remembrance (December 28th) of the innocents of Bethlehem massacred by Herod.

We have been instructed by the Apostles to observe the days of the Circumcision and of the Presentation in the Temple only in connexion with Christmas.

These were events of marked importance in our Lord's religious life; they had direct relation to the Law He came to fulfil, and to the Gospel He came to introduce. No such position can be claimed for the visit of the wise men from the East. Interesting as that event is, it has no more title to a special day of remembrance than has the corresponding incident at the close of our Lord's ministry, when "certain Greeks desired to speak with Him at the feast."¹ Like the conversation with the doctors in the Temple, the temptation in the wilderness, and the transfiguration on the holy mount, it may well be brought before us by lesson or gospel, but it is not of sufficient importance to pervade the whole services of any day. The same remarks apply with double force to the commemoration of the Holy Innocents.

2. The first division of the Christian Year is thus formed by Christmas, with its preparatory season of Advent, and its dependent days of the Circumcision and the Presentation in the Temple. The weeks which follow Christmas image, as has been said, our Lord's life on earth. As Easter begins to come into view, we follow the universal and immemorial usage of naming the Sundays as in Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Quinquagesima, and Quadragesima successively,—making them milestones, as it were, on our way to tell how far we are from the goal. But we do not, like the rest of the Church, observe the last mentioned period as a time of fasting and humiliation. The reason of such difference will appear in its proper place.²

In the sacred season which stretches from Palm Sunday to Ascension all Churches are at one; and we,

* John xii. 20. † See First Sunday in Quadragesima.

under the guidance of Apostles, follow the common track. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday, the various incidents of the time from the Monday to the Wednesday of the Holy Week, the institution of the Eucharist on the Thursday, the Passion on the Friday, the Burial on the Saturday, and the glorious Resurrection on the Sunday following, are all specially commemorated: and forty days after the resurrection we celebrate the Ascension into heaven. Then, like the disciples of old, we wait yet ten days, looking for the promise of the Father.

3. When the Day of Pentecost has fully come, the whole Church unites in celebrating the giving of the Holy Ghost. We retain, with the Eastern and Roman Calendars, the name of the Feast in its ancient Greek form. In England Pentecost has become, as some say, through the German Pfingsten, Whitsun Day; according to others, from another derivation, Whit-Sunday.

The Sunday after Pentecost, like that after Christmas and after Easter, belongs to the preceding Feast, of which it is the "Octave." But all Calendars, save our own, have confused this meaning of it by giving to it a special name and purpose. The Greek Church calls it the Sunday of All Saints, celebrating on it a feast which the Western Church keeps on the first day of November. The Roman and English Churches, since the twelfth century, have styled it "Trinity Sunday," and devoted it to the contemplation of that glorious Mystery. We have no such festival, although (as we shall see) by using their epistle and gospel for the day we do unite with our Western brethren in the direction of our thoughts thereon. In the English

* See First Sunday after Pentecost.

Calendar, a very unfortunate result has followed the introduction of Trinity Sunday. The long line of Sundays which stretch on from Whitsuntide to Advent have been called "Sundays *after Trinity*," instead of, as by the Greek and Roman Churches, and in our own Calendar, "Sundays *after Pentecost*." They image, as we have seen, the waiting time of the Church in this dispensation, from the giving of the Holy Ghost to the Second Coming of the Lord. Thus they are Sundays after Pentecost indeed: and to call them Sundays after Trinity is to obscure, as far as names go, their symbolical meaning.

4. Various festivals are observed by both Eastern and Western Churches in the interval between Pentecost and Advent. The only two we have been instructed to keep are the commemoration of All Angels on September 29th, and the commemoration of All Saints on November 1st. It seems very fitting that in the sense of the guardianship of God's angels and of the communion of His saints we should wait for the coming again of His Christ. The Feast of All Saints, too, gathers up into one real and hearty commemoration all those names of holy men and martyrs which are scattered so profusely through the ecclesiastical calendars. We have no "Saints' Days": but we make far more of the day of All Saints than do any of the Churches of Christendom. Not content with praising God for His goodness in raising up so many witnesses for His name, and with seeking to follow their holy example, we go on to realize our communion with all departed in the faith, and to enter into their present hope and longing. We cry for the raising of the dead and the changing of the living, and the catching up to meet in the Lord in the air. We listen to the Epistles

to the Seven Churches, that our heart may be enlarged, and our sympathies quickened with those who overcome in every age and country. And so we seek to hasten the blessed time when the King of saints shall appear; and we shall all be gathered together in the general festal assembly and congregation of the first-born.

This is the Sacred Calendar, as Apostles have delivered it to us. It seems specially marked by two features,—its consistent carrying out of the principle of the Christian Year, and its judicious restraint as to the number of festivals. The result of the latter has been that in the churches under Apostles holy days are really kept, and thus their purpose answered.

II. And now a few words as to the manner in which, in the several Communions, the sacred seasons of the Church are observed.

The complexity of the Greek Service-books is beyond conception. Almost every day throughout the year is a saint's day, and every saint has his own special commemoration, so that the intermingling of these with the ordinary offices and with the specialties of the holy seasons—themselves very numerous—results in the utmost intricacy. The Roman Breviary is hardly less copious and confusing, from the same cause. Both in East and West, accordingly, these services have become useless for general edification. They contain rich treasures of devotion, but these are scarcely known save to the clergy, and probably only to the studious among them. The Eucharist in both Communions is more happily circumstanced. There are variable portions in the Greek "Liturgy" and in the Roman "Mass", and these are made to take their tone from the season with the best effect.

If the Greek and Roman offices are too multiple and

complex, the English Prayer Book errs in the opposite direction. The variable portions of its services are few, embracing only the Lessons and Psalms; the Collect; Epistle, and Gospel; and the addition to the Preface in the Communion service. Besides these, it substitutes a special Anthem for its introductory Psalm on Easter Day, and uses a "Commination" service on Ash Wednesday. This is absolutely all; and, were it not for hymnody, there would be little to help Anglican worshippers to realise any of the solemn occasions of their Calendar.

In the Liturgy which the Apostles have given us we feel that either extreme has been avoided, while everything has been done to bring the thoughts and feeling proper to the holy seasons vividly into our minds. The services of obligation—the Holy Eucharist and the Daily Matins and Vespers—afford in their numerous variable portions every opportunity for appropriate language, and advantage has been abundantly taken thereof. The less defined offices of Forenoon and Afternoon Prayer allow of the introduction of much of the gold of the Greek and Roman service books. Thus we have the "O Wisdom of God" in Advent, the *Improperia* on Good Friday, and the special versicles and responds on Easter Eve, Easter Day, and Ascension Day. We have but to think, moreover, of the services for Holy Thursday and "Good Friday, for the Eve of Pentecost, and for All Saints' Day, to feel how greatly we have been helped by the liturgical forms originated for us by Apostles to enter into the spirit of the sacred occasions of the Church.

Another and hardly less important instrument for effecting this purpose is the ministry of word. Where

this can be heard, and the service of the Liturgy joined in, nothing more is needed. But there are many who are so situated that, occasionally if not habitually, they are beyond the reach of one or both of these means. For such the following pages are designed. Their aim is to supply them, for every Sunday and Holy Day throughout the year, with a Reading appropriate thereto. It is the author's earnest prayer that these may be helpful to their readers in building them up in their most holy faith, in enabling them to continue steadfastly in Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in encouraging them in looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing for which we wait.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

“The night is far spent: the day is at hand.”

I.

ONCE more the trumpet-note of the Advent epistle has pealed upon our ears, and we have heard the words, “It is high time for us to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.” Be it our task at this time to examine the fact alleged by the Apostle as the ground of his exhortation.

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” What night, and what day? The night, commentators are apt to say, is the darkness of heathenism, then fast melting into day as the light of the Gospel overspread the world. But if this be so, what means the word—“now is our salvation nearer than when we believed”? That the night is far spent and the day at hand but repeats this in different language; the day which is at hand is the salvation which is near. And this “salvation” is not the grace of the past and present, that came when we believed and comes as we believe. It is a future thing; it is nearer now than it was when we believed. What can it be but that of which it is said—“Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second

time without sin unto salvation." What is the night but His absence, the day but His return, who is the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in His wings?

While He was in the world, He was the Light of the world, and could say, "Walk while ye have the Light with you." When He left this world, and went unto the Father, night—the sudden darkness of an Eastern sky—fell upon it. "The whole world," says the Apostle, "lieth in darkness." And though in those who, while they had the Light, believed in the Light, and so could become children of Light—though in these, I say, sending down His own Spirit upon them, He lit up the light of eternal life, so that while all Egypt is in darkness, in their land of Goshen there is light; yet was this an inner illumining only. Though not of the world, they were in it; though "not of the night nor of darkness," yet they knew it all around them, and rejoiced to believe that the night was far spent, and the day of their Lord's return at hand.

And is it otherwise now? The light which was kindled in their hearts has indeed burned on through the ages, and shines to-day in ours. It has streamered into the surrounding gloom, and done something to dispel it, but it has not made the day. The world still lies in darkness, and waits for a future dawn; and we also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, wait with it. Apostles say to us, as the Apostle said to those of old, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." And they who speak are themselves the evidence of the fact they proclaim. What is it that shines in the yet dark east, poised as it were over the unrisen sun, to tell that it is on its way? It is the morning star. Apostles at the beginning were rather the star of

evening—the first lights to appear in heaven when the Light of the world had set. But Apostles, reappearing now, remind us of that which astronomy tells, that the same star is now an evening, now a morning one—Hesperus over the buried sun, Phosphorus in the van of his return; but as Hesper and as Phosphorus one and the same. The ministry now is as the ministry then, in its immediate mission and its universal charge. But its witness is different in direction, then to the Christ that had gone, now to the Christ that is coming again.

We, seeing this day-star, know that the dawn is near. But there is one thing required, if the Sun that is rising is to bring us joy and peace, and that is what St. Peter hints at—“until the day dawn, and the day-star arise *in our hearts.*” Not before our eyes only, but in our hearts—to be there an object of grateful appreciation, of loving loyalty, of fruitful devotion. So apprehended, the fore-runner shall bring us to the Christ indeed; and the endless day of a happy future shall ere long flood us with its light.

“The night is far spent: the day is at hand.

II.

THE Prophet of old stood upon his watch-tower, and when one cried to him, “Watchman, what of the night?” the answer was, “The morning cometh, but also the night.” The sense of dwelling in the night, but watching for the morning, is present throughout their goodly fellowship, until the last one closes his

roll with the assurance that unto them that fear Jehovah's name, the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.

Four hundred years passed by, and then the Sun of righteousness arose. Healing indeed, and light and life, came to all who were reached by His rays. Had the world, which was made by Him, known Him: had His own, to whom He came, received Him, the day of God might then have begun. But that Sun went down at mid-noon, in the eclipse of rejection and death. The morning came, but also the night. And when the Apostles took up the Prophets' stand, they looked around upon a world lying in darkness still. The night was far spent, they hoped: but it was still night.

Why does the Church choose these words for her epistle on Advent Sunday? Is it not that she believes them to be as true now as when first they were spoken? The night in which the Apostle felt himself to be is still reigning, and will reign, until the Sun that then set in blood rise again upon the earth. Some think that it has long ago given place to day. The Sun of righteousness still shines, they say, into the hearts that cleave to Him in faithful memory and loving communion. From this ever-multiplying company the light He gives is being diffused world-wide. We thank God that it is so. But what is this but to say that our night is not without a moon—a lesser light to catch and reflect the rays of the greater luminary while hidden from our view? But the moon can only brighten the night; it cannot dispel it, nor make it day. The earth acknowledges it not; the birds will not sing in its light, nor the flowers open to its rays. Nothing but the sun can make the day. The memory of what He was only makes us long the more for His presence

again. The communion which under the veil of earthly things we now have with Him only makes us athirst for the time when with unveiled face we shall behold Him. Do not tell us that the kingdom has come while the King is absent. Shine on, moon and stars, and bless with useful light. We shall none the less look for the sunrising, and watch for the dawn of day.

For again, the Advent epistle is—"the night is far spent, the day is at hand." If those words were true when the Apostle wrote them, how much more true must they be now. Many an hour of darkness has passed since then; and the long night must surely be wearing to its close. There are many whisperings of a change in the dark world now around us. If any have often watched through the night, by a sick bed, or, it may be, upon one, they know that there is a frequent token just before the dawn that it is drawing near. If all has hitherto been still, there rises a single gust of wind, and sweeps over the earth. When it has died away, the earliest birds begin to sing, and the watcher at the window may see in the far east the first faint streaks of dawn.

Has it not been thus in the history of the Church in this our day? The wind that bloweth where it listeth suddenly arose, waking many a sleeper, and telling those who watched that day was near. The Holy Spirit swept through His temple; and then arose many a sweet voice of prophecy, and sang of the coming joy. And now, watchman, what of the night? Is the light growing in the east? If so, it is high time that we should awake out of sleep, that we cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let not the first sunbeams strike upon us yet half awake and

unkempt from our slumbers. Still less let them find us in the revellings of the flesh, and we stand shivering and ashamed in the cold light of the discovering dawn. But up and ready, with hearts cleansed by His blood and robed in His righteousness, let us stand to meet our King.

O "dawn of Eden, bright over earth and sky!" when shall we hail thee? when shall we come nigh to thee? The Lord hasten the time, for His own name's sake!

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Emergence of the High Priest from within the Veil.

Heb. ix. 28.

THIS passage occurs at the close of the well-known application of the rites of the great day of Atonement to the work of Jesus Christ. On that day the high priest went within the veil into the holy of holies, bearing with him the blood of the sacrifice he had offered in the outer court. Entering in, he sprinkled the blood before the mercy-seat, and caused sweet incense to arise to Him who dwelt thereon between the cherubim. So, says the writer to the Hebrews, Christ in His Ascension entered the true Holiest, even heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Appearing before the throne as the Lamb as it had been slain, He as it were sprinkles in memorial the blood of His sacrifice once offered here below. Ever making intercession for us, incense of truest acceptableness goes up from His hand. But there is yet another step in the parallel. The high priest did not remain within the veil till the day had ended; at the time of the evening sacrifice he came forth in his garments for glory and for beauty, to bless the waiting people. And so, the writer concludes, the work of the High Priest of our profession is not yet finished. He

is within the veil; and we stand without, waiting till He reappears to bless us. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." In the evening of the dispensation He will come forth in glory; and then, and not till then, will the day of His Atonement be completed.

It is very singular how often the point of this conclusion of the chapter—its reference to the emergence of the high priest from behind the veil—is missed by commentators on Holy Scripture. Or rather, it would be singular, were it not of a piece with the whole treatment which the subject of the Lord's second coming has received.*

"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." "Without sin," having no regard and no reference to sin; and so without a sin-offering. The work of the high priest when he came forth from the holiest was indeed to present the evening sacrifice. But that sacrifice, like its fellow in the morning, consisted not in sin-offering but in burnt-offering—the symbol of entire dedication to God in body, soul, and spirit, as is our reasonable and bounden service. We, Christ's Church and people, are the chosen victim of that sacrifice, presented in Him and by Him before the Father's throne. Once more in the evening, as in the morning of the age, clad in the same glory as that which He had with the Father then, and before the world was, the Son by the eternal Spirit offers Himself without spot to God. But now it is as the Head of a Body, perfectly one with Him, partaking in His Priesthood, sharing in His

* See 'Apostles' Doctrine and Fellowship,' Lect. xi, and xii.

anointing. In His morning sacrifice* He was alone but in the time of the evening sacrifice "He shall see His seed," His people shall be willing in the day of His power. Then shall the Christ of God, Head and members,† be seen; and seen as entirely consecrated unto the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. "Rejoicing in His glory, made like unto Him in His glory, by Him we shall be presented with exceeding joy before the presence of Thy glory."

The Harvest and the Vintage.

Rev. xiv. 14-20.

AND now what remains but that the Lord Jesus should come forth, to deliver His people in their time of sore need, and to execute judgment on those who oppress them, and pollute the earth. His so doing is here set forth under the images respectively of the reaping of the harvest and the treading of the winepress.

I. And, first, of the harvest.

"I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

"The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers

* Heb. x. 5-7.

† 1 Cor. xii. 12.

are the angels." This word of our Lord is the key to the interpretation of the present vision. He compares* the whole Christian dispensation to the annual history of the wheat-field. The sowing of the seed is His work at the beginning as the Son of man: the gathering of the wheat into His barn is His work at the end as the Judge, when He shall separate between the good and the evil, the wheat and the tares. Accordingly, it is the "One like unto the Son of man," whom John had seen at the beginning of his visions,† who now appears, sitting on a white cloud, on His head a golden crown, in His hand a sharp sickle, to reap the harvest of the earth. The angels will be the reapers, but He will send and direct them. It is the fulfilment of His own prophecy—"Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."‡.

These His elect will be, as the previous part of the chapter indicates,§ in sore trouble at the time. And this is evidenced here by the cry of intercession that goes up to the Reaper, "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe." The word rendered "is ripe" is one never used to signify the natural maturity of the fruits of the earth: it rather signifies "is scorched," or "dried up." So fierce is the scorching of the sun of antichristian rule at this time, that there is danger lest its ripening effects should proceed too far, and the good ears be withered with the heat. Therefore it is

* Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43. † Rev. i. 13-18.

‡ Luke xxi. 27; Matt. xxiv. 31. § Ver. 9-13; Comp. ch. xiii.

high time for the Lord of the harvest to send forth His reapers. The first-fruits, the 144,000 sealed ones, are already in safety on the mount of God.* But when the great multitude which no man can number stand before the throne and before the Lamb, it is said of them, "These are they which came out of the great tribulation" (Gr.). And their blessedness is that "the sun shall no more light on them, nor any heat . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."†

In this Book of Revelation the harvest, like the first fruits, belongs to those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord; and takes its colouring from their condition. But in our Lord's parable it embraces all who have grown from the good seed sown in the field of the world by the Son of man, and who have remained faithful to the end, and if so, then the departed as well as the living. We believe, therefore, that them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him when He comes to reap; that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep, but shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall ever be with the Lord. The harvest is the first resurrection—the changing of all, whether asleep or awake, who are Christ's at His coming.‡ It is the gathering of all Saints to the general festal assembly and congregation of the first-born—to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

¶. This is the harvest of the earth; and now we have the last act of the year, the vintage. ..

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And

* Rev. xiv. 1-5. * † Ibid. ch. vii. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 23, 51, 52.

another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

All the symbols here are of judgment. When the vine of the earth and its branches—Antichrist and those that are his*—have brought their fruit to ripeness, when their iniquity is come to the full, then they shall be gathered and cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God; and the winepress shall be trodden. The Lord and His associates in this act of judgment† are compared to the vintagers, who, when they have gathered the grapes into the presses, themselves enter into them, and with bare feet tread and crush the grapes till their juice is utterly expressed. By this great visitation the earth is cleansed of the apostate and the lawless, and is prepared to be the habitation of the meek.

A fuller picture of this great event is given us in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation. The first part of it tells of the marriage of the Lamb, which we have seen figured here as the harvest of the earth. But now (ver. 11) the Son of God comes forth to war. His espousals have been held in His presence-chamber in the heavens. He has celebrated them all accoutred

* Comp. John xv: 5.

† Rev. ii. 27; xvii. 14.

for battle. The day of vengeance is in His heart, and the year of His redeemed is come. When He issues forth, His bride comes with Him; for the armies in heaven which follow Him are clothed in her fine linen, white and clean.* And it is said of Him, "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are gathered† together to make war against Him that sitteth on the horse, and against His army. But the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.† The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire; and the rest are slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth. Then the dragon is bound, and the thousand years of peace set in upon the earth.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Heavenly Jerusalem.

Rev. xxi. 9 : xxii. 5.

ADVENT sets us looking out towards the future. What is it we see at the end, as we gaze down its long vista? We see walls, and gates, and foundations, and streets: there is a river also, and a tree. Is this a dream of a poet, a mirage of the desert? Nay; it is the realization of all hopes, the fulfilment of all promises. It is the goal of our journeyings; it is the city of God.

All things that happened unto Israel happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition. Not without meaning, therefore, was it that their earthly hope was uniformly connected with a city. Abraham sojourned in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. As his children journey through the wilderness toward the land of their inheritance, they hear of a place which the Lord shall choose among all their tribes to set His Name there. The place of His choice becomes manifest when David takes from the Jebusites the stronghold of Zion, round which had grown the city of Jerusalem. Hitherto the land had had no metropolis, the people no centre of government and worship. But now the ark of God is brought

hither by David; and, later, the Temple is builded by Solomon, and also his own palace. Jerusalem becomes the holy place of the Most High, the heart of the national life, the symbol of all that is most dear to the patriot and most sacred to the worshipper. Psalmists and prophets make it the theme of their sublimest strains. Illustrious kings sit on its throne, and holy priests minister at its altar, and lofty seers are among its councillors. It is beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth.

God allowed the earthly Jerusalem to stand until its value as a symbol was complete, and then He broke it to pieces. He would not have His people to rest in any earthly fulfilment of His promises. Joshua gave them not His rest: * there remaineth yet a rest for the people of God. Jerusalem that now is was not their continuing city: they had yet to seek one to come. † Abraham, and all his, well knew that it was so. "They died in faith . . . confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Now they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. . . . They desire *a better country, that is, a heavenly.*" † "They are not to be heard," the Church of England truly says in one of her Articles, "which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises." If their descendants of a later day had declined from their spiritual faith; if they had come to bind up with the earthly Jerusalem all that God had to give to man, it was in mercy that He broke their idol in pieces. But as He did so, He caused to rise before the vision of His last Apostle the heavenly reality of which it was but a shadow. The wilderness of Sinai was seen

to be the type of this present world, and the true city of God would only be manifested when all things were made new.

To this truth the Lord Jesus Himself had led His disciples. On that night before He suffered, when His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, He spake thus unto His own, whom He loved unto the end:—"In my Father's house are many mansions I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also." Many mansions—that is, places for abiding, not merely for sojourning—many mansions in the one house, as many dwellings in the one city; the joy of the Lord to be entered into by the saints not as separate individuals, but as members of one family, citizens of one city. Such is the force of the image. And then observe that the Father's house is in the heaven to which the Lord was about to ascend; for He said, "I go to prepare a place for you:" and that His people are not received to the many mansions at death, but at His second coming, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

St. Paul also had learnt the truth of the heavenly city before St. John had seen the vision of it. He knew that, besides the Jerusalem which then was, and was in bondage with her children, there was a Jerusalem above, which is free, and is the mother of us all who are Abraham's true seed in Jesus Christ.* He was confident that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not

made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* And when, in contrast with the earthly-minded, he said, "our conversation is in heaven," he could not but think of the city there to which we belong; and he used for conversation a word implying citizenship.† And who but he, recalling the glories of the chosen city, but desiring to show that it had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth, burst forth into that rapturous strain—"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel"?‡

Of that which was shown to St. John in Patmos we say nothing at present.§ Suffice it, that the glimpse he caught of the heavenly city has set all hearts burning from that time to this. Christian poets have found in its every aspect a theme for song; and Christian congregations have never wearied of singing the hymns they have made about it. It has given form and colour to our vision of the heavenly home. No mere rest in a paradise will that be for us, no lying at continual feast in Abraham's bosom; but rather the life of citizens in a city, full of high counsel and noble fellowship, wherein we stand around the King thereof, and aid Him to make it indeed the joy of the whole earth.

Truly "our citizenship is in heaven." It is not

* 2 Cor. v. † Phil. iii. 20. ‡ Heb. xii.

‡ See Sunday after All Saints.

that we are to be half-hearted in the work we have here to do. Whatever duties our capacities call us to, whatever claims our position makes upon us, let us discharge them with all our might. Yet it cannot be but that ever and anon the things of this life shall seem the shadows they are. They shall fade from around us, and we shall know ourselves to be in the wilderness, pressing toward the land of promise. There only can our energies find their full scope; our longings their entire satisfaction. Our treasure is there, and our heart is there, where is the River of life, and the Tree of life, and the Throne of God and of the Lamb; where His servants see His face, and His name is on their foreheads. O that we were there!

“When shall our eyes thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold,
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold?”

We desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called our God; for He hath prepared for us a city.

The Lord's Forerunner.

THERE is a prophecy of old which begins thus:—

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

Those who have travelled in Eastern countries tell us the meaning of this figurative language. When a prince would take a journey, or visit a distant part of

his possessions, he sends messengers on before to make ready the road by which he would travel. If robbers infest it, these must be cleared away, and guards stationed. If it pass through a desert, means of rest and refreshment must be provided at suitable halting-places. The road itself must be mended:—the rough stones must be gathered out, and the inequalities smoothed. And those who dwell upon the route must be apprised of the coming of the great one, that at his approach they may assemble to render him homage and do him service.

It was a people to whom this custom was familiar who asked the Baptist, "Who art thou?" and to whom he replied, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." There was a need be that he should so declare himself. No prince would travel without a forerunner; and now Messiah was coming, of whom God would testify that He was King of Israel. So came His messenger before His face to prepare the way before Him.

And if it was so then, how shall it be otherwise now? Shall no herald go before to announce His second coming in glorious majesty? Shall He come without provision made for Him, by a route unfit to travel over, to a multitude unprepared with their palm-branches and their hosannas? We pray—the Church around us is praying this day—that as the Baptist prepared the way for His first coming, so His ministers, the stewards of God's mysteries, may make ready for His second. But it is not the ordinary ministry, nor the ordinary ministrations of the Church, by which this can be done. In the days immediately before the first Advent, the Jewish priesthood was existing still,

From Aaron downwards it had ministered before the Lord; and the priest's lips had kept knowledge, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But it had not made ready His way before Him. The prophet had to be raised up, after four hundred years' abeyance, to accomplish this. And so now the bishops, priests, and deacons of the Catholic Church are in their places, and fulfilling their work. They claim an unbroken succession from the bishops appointed by Apostles at the first. They teach Jacob God's law, and Israel His judgments: they put incense before Him, and whole burnt sacrifice upon His altar. But they do not prepare the way of the Lord. Their presence in the Church is no sign that He is at hand: nor has their work any necessary connection with His coming. But if the mission of the Baptist is any true instance of the way of God's dealings,—if the coming in glory is to be heralded at least as plainly as was the coming in weakness,—the long-lost apostleship must reappear in the Church. Then shall the voice be heard in the wilderness of this world. The hearts of all shall be stirred who behold so manifest a token of His approach. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight, and the rough places plain."

By thoughts such as these we confirm our own faith, and invite that of our brethren. But what it behoves us specially this Advent time to consider is—Is the work of the Lord's forerunner being done in each one of us? The road by which He comes is not of sand or stone. It is formed of human hearts; and only as these make way for Him can He pass on to His kingdom. What carefulness, what clearing of ourselves, what indignation, what fear, should this knowledge excite! Shall not the way be

smoothed and levelled forthwith? the swellings of pride be brought down, the depressions of baseness elevated, the rough stones of hardness of heart gathered out? Can we permit the world, the flesh, and the devil to invade the road by which our Lord would come? Do we delay to enlist all thoughts and desires and imaginations and emotions into the band of those who shall welcome Him, and line His path with rejoicing?

These, we say, should be our Advent thoughts. It is a time for self-examination and for repentance. The burden of the Baptist's cry must be taken up anew, and "Repent ye" must always go first when "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" comes after. The Church has need of repentance as much as had Israel of old. The sins of many generations lie sore upon her; and the hearts of her children must be as the hearts of the fathers, if there is to be made ready a people prepared for the Lord. Yet not for this shall Advent be to us other than a joyful season. Let those robe it in sombre colours who sing only—

"Day of wrath, O day of mourning,"
and not—

"Hope of our hearts, O Lord, appear,
Thou glorious Star of day."

But we are called upon to lift up our heads and *rejoice*, because our redemption draweth nigh. Hence our Advent services are saddened by no penitential gloom; and our *Te Deum* and our *Gloria* peal forth in uninterrupted course. And as with the season, so with the whole work of preparation which it symbolises. If the Lord is coming in glory, shall not the very outriders of His chariot be glorious? The Baptist may come in camel's hair and leathern girdle to herald the Advent in *humiliation*. But let all the glory and

beauty that earth can bring be lavished on that embassy which proclaims the coming of the King, the Lord of hosts, in the majesty of His Father's kingdom.

And so shall the prophecy have end, and "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Meaning of the Advent Season.

We have seen, alike from the types of the law, and from the theory of the Christian Year as representing the Christian history,¹ that this season of Advent has a double aspect. The ministry of John the Baptist was the close of the old dispensation; although from its preparatory relation to the new, it is recorded at the beginning of the New Testament scriptures. And so the Advent season, which is its parallel, is seen as ending the weeks after Pentecost, as well as ushering in the new Christmas.

This former character is especially seen in the collects appointed to be used during Advent. We have been offering the same collect from Pentecost through all the weeks which follow it; and we continue to offer it throughout Advent. Another, however, is added to it, which speaks of the work of Christ's ministers in preparing the way for His second coming as the Baptist for His first. The continued use of the Pentecostal collect shews that in one aspect at least Advent is the termination of that period of the Christian Year which begins with the Day of Pentecost, and images the life of the Church on earth from her nativity in the gift of the Comforter. And the additional collect indicates that that termination shall be marked

¹ See Introduction

by a special work of heralding and preparation, like the ministry of the Baptist of old.

Throughout our Advent services this aspect of the season is ever the most prominent. The other is indeed apparent enough; and, if Christmas come round once more, our Advent will have duly prepared us for its celebration. But still more does it avail to quicken our hope and prepare our hearts for that second coming of which the first was but an earnest. That for this His ministers may prepare His way we pray in the collect. In the anthems we cry that the Lamb may be sent forth to be the Ruler of the earth; we rejoice that the marriage of the Lamb is near, and exhort that His Bride make herself ready. The epistles and gospels which are appointed for the four Sundays in Advent testify to the same thing. On the first there is the trumpet-voice, "The night is far spent; the day is at hand," to wake us from our slumbers; and the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem to picture to us His second coming, when all shall cry, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." The second and third Sundays show us how the Lord is now present in His Church by His word and His ministers, by them inspiring patience and hope, and preparing the way for His personal coming. And to-day once more the trumpet-note is sounded in the epistle, "The Lord is at hand;" and in the gospel we see the ending of the work of the forerunner. For—"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God This is He of whom I spake."

And while these things are so throughout the season, in this its last week, the note of preparation for the second Advent rings out more clearly still. From the

eighteenth to the twenty-fourth of December inclusive our services are full of one subject. Special anthems are appointed daily for Morning and Evening Prayer; another Advent collect follows the one already in use. In the Forenoon and Afternoon Services are said those ancient versicles, beginning, "O Wisdom of God." We are not content, like our brethren of the Latin Church, to use one only of these daily. But accumulating all together,—by every name which He has assumed, by every grace which He has manifested and will manifest, we call upon our King, crying "Come, Lord Jesu!" These are accompanied by additional prayers, all speaking of the same future hope—all ending "That when Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, shall come." And so the days roll on, and our passionate supplication rises higher and higher, and goes forth ever with deeper intensity, till Christmas dawns, and all sinks into silence. Our note is then of joy indeed, but joy that is realized, not expected. What shall we say but that the coming of the Lord Himself should rightly crown our supplications; and only when the whole earth is filled with His glory the prayers of David the son of Jesse be ended?

If these Advent services are (as we maintain them to be) a faithful rendering of the Church's mind in this holy season, certain consequences follow. Of two of these we will speak; the first concerning our brethren around us, the second relating to ourselves.

I. The weeks which follow Pentecost represent the course of this dispensation from the giving of the Comforter onwards. What means, then, the intervention of a season such as Advent, before the ending of these weeks in the consummation of Christmas? What can it mean but that to which all types, and symbols, and

prophecies bear witness—that a special work of preparation must precede the coming of the Lord, and the end of this present age. His reward is with Him, but *His work before Him*. And that work is seen to be no new Pentecost, but something which draws all its force from the giving of the Spirit at the Pentecost of old. It is a continuation, in however revived vigour, of that which then came into being: it inherits the whole work of the Holy Ghost in the Church. Its one distinctive feature is that in it the ministers of Christ, the stewards of the mysteries of God, are making ready and preparing the way for their Lord's second coming, even as the Baptist for His first.

• If, then, the Church does well in keeping the season of Advent, she should, in all consistency, look for a special work of preparation to precede the coming of the Lord. Our message to our brethren is, that that work is proceeding; that we are living in the very Advent-time of this dispensation. This is the day of the Lord's forerunner, the hour of the shining of the morning star. Oh that they would believe this. Then, indeed, would the night be far spent, and the day at hand. •

II. And now a word for ourselves. We are gathered in the faith of these things. We have seen the Lord's star in the east, and are come to worship Him. If Advent be here, Christmas cannot be far off. We may indeed hope that we have now arrived at the time to which the more urgent supplications of this last week of Advent point. Brighter and brighter in these late years has become to us the hope of glory; clearer and clearer in the light of prophecy have grown the details of its realization. O let these solemn observances of ours quicken our sense of it, that so we may be

purified by it more perfectly, that its holy flame may consume our worldliness while it warms our piety. So shall Advent year by year bring closer the fulfilment of its own anticipations; and the coming One of whom it speaks shall be willingly drawn from heaven by the love and longing of His faithful.

“Rejoice in the Lord alway The Lord is at hand.”

THIS life is full of troubles. Pain, disappointment, and bereavement beset us on every side. The air is full of litanies of supplication—“Have mercy upon us,” “Good Lord, deliver us.” No one knew from experience the sufferings of this present time better than the apostle Paul. And yet he exhorts us in to-day’s epistle, “Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say unto you, rejoice.” In this he does but follow the tenor of all Scripture. Joy is no mere natural emotion. It is a Christian virtue: it is one of the fruits of the Spirit. The kingdom of heaven is not only righteousness and peace, but also joy in the Holy Ghost. Now joy is the sense of delight; and to delight in anything we must needs be able to feel it and know it. A deaf man cannot delight in sweet music, nor an idiot in a great poem. So, if to rejoice in the Lord be ours, the Lord must be a living reality to us. We must know Him as we know a friend or a brother. We must in the spirit have seen His face and touched His hand. Converse and communion with Him must be no unfamiliar thing to us, exercise of thought upon

Him, going out of feeling towards Him. So rejoicing in the Lord shall come, not of duty merely, but spontaneously. We shall have pleasure in Him not less really than in those nearest and dearest to us,—as a son speaks with reverent gladness of the greatness of a noble father, as a proud mother feels her heart swell and her eyes fill when she thinks of her faithful children. We will abundantly utter the memory of His great goodness, and will sing of His righteousness. In His name we will rejoice all the day, singing, Worthy art thou, O Lord! worthy is the Lamb that was slain!

And this rejoicing in the Lord is to be "alway." Not only when He blesses us, but also when He afflicts us; for affliction and blessing alike come from Him who loveth us. No fruit of the Spirit may be lacking in the plants of God's garden. Our peace must abound, though in the midst of fightings without and fears within; and our joy must not fail, however much there be to cause us to lament. This will come about in proportion as the world grows less to us and the Lord more. In the world, tribulation; in me, peace: in the world, sorrow; in me, joy. So says the Lord, and so His saints have ever found it. They go singing through the desolate wilderness and the valley of affliction, for He is with them. Nothing but the hiding of His face can trouble them, for He is more to them than all else beside, than parent, or consort, or child, or friend, than name or estate, than comfort or honour. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

"Rejoice in the Lord alway," says the Apostle; but he could hardly have said so had he not been able to

go on, "The Lord is at hand." No suffering for the present seemeth to be joyous, but rather grievous; and we could not glory in tribulations also, but for hope, the hope that maketh not ashamed, the hope of the glory of God. "The Lord is at hand," to wipe away tears from off all faces, to right the unequal balance of society, to put down tyranny and oppression, to bind Satan, and swallow up death in victory. He comes, bringing with Him those we have lost; He comes to set up in the world a kingdom of righteousness; He comes to break off all burdens, to bind up all broken hearts, to clear our confusions, to perfect our charity. Truly, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. God, who knows this best, is happy, though He sees His creature suffer. Could His love allow Him to be happy did He not foresee the far more exceeding and abundant weight of glory which shall accrue from present tribulation? We see His face lighted up with the future, invisible to us; and in His happiness we read our hope. So we rejoice "in the Lord." We smile back His smile, assured that all is well.

And therefore is Advent to us a time of holy joy. A practice has grown up in the Church of making it a penitential season. She occupies it with presenting before her children

" that day of wrath, that awful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away. "

and bids them, with fasting and tears, prepare to meet their Judge. If it must be so that the Lamb's wife has no heart to await His coming otherwise than in sack-cloth and ashes, God forbid that we should check her sorrowing. But there are multitudes of faithful souls

all over Christendom to whom the Advent trumpet sounds a more joyous note. They know their own shortcomings; indeed; but all thought of self is swallowed up in the love of the Bridegroom, and in sympathy with the ruined world and the groaning creation, which nothing but His coming can bless. Of such the Lord would make up His sheaf of first-fruits. Shall we not go forth to gather them? The Baptist's cry, in the Advent-time of that dispensation, was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Ours may well be, "Rejoice, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, how beautiful are thy feet on the mountains! Thou sayest, "Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem!" Thou sayest, "Arise! shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is rising upon thee." What else can we do but be glad and rejoice, when the marriage of the Lamb is near, and His wife doth make herself ready?

CHRISTMAS DAY.

The Nativity.

Heb. i. 1-12.

John i. 1-14.

THE birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is the meeting-point of the great lines of prophetic light and of apostolic doctrine. To it the former converge; from it the latter radiate. On the farther side of it stand the goodly fellowship of the prophets. Their eager eyes look out into the yet distant future. In burning yet broken words they tell their fellows the glimpses they have caught of the coming glory. David foresees, in his own tribe, along his own line, a more imperial Solomon—a Son who is also his Lord. Micah cries to Bethlehem, “Out of thee shall He come forth that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Isaiah sings of One virgin-born, whose name shall be called Emmanuel, God with us. And Malachi closes the roll with the vision of the Lord coming suddenly to His temple, and sending His messenger before His face, to prepare His way before Him.

So God, in time past, by sundry parts and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the Prophets. And now the glorious company of the Apostles take up the wondrous tale. Hear them, by the mouth of their last surviving representative, speak of what happened that

Christmas Day.

first Christmas Day. In the beginning—when the heavens and earth were created—there was already existing the Word of God. He was with God. He was God. By Him all things were made. In the fulness of time He was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. Surely this thing is the same as that of which the prophets spoke; surely, when the Word was made flesh, that prophecy was fulfilled, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God.”

And then let us turn to the event of which such glorious things are spoken. On a winter's night, eighteen hundred and more years ago, in a little village of Judaea a Hebrew woman gives birth to her first-born son. Nothing seems more commonplace. But remember that this village is Bethlehem, and that this mother is here because she is of the house and lineage of David. Enquire a little further, and you will hear of the strange events which heralded this birth, of Zacharias and Elizabeth, of the annunciation of the angel, of Joseph's dream,—and you will begin to think you see before you the virgin of whom Isaiah spoke. Wait yet a while, and breathless shepherds shall come running in, telling of a vision of glory, of an angelic message, of the *Gloria in excelsis* of the heavenly host. Tarry at Bethlehem a while longer, and Magi shall come from the far east, laden with costly gifts. They have seen His star—this Baby's star!—and have come to worship Him. Journey, lastly, with the holy family to Jerusalem, and accompany them as they go up to the Temple to offer for the purification, and to present the first-born. See just and devout Simeon taking the Child into his arms, and declaring Him to be the Light

'that shall lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. Hear aged Anna the prophetess, as she comes in, breaking forth into thanksgiving, and speaking of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And then all hesitation must be at an end, and there is nothing but to come with adoration and worship the Lord.'

" This is He whom seers in old time
Chanted of with one accord ;
Whom the voices of the Prophets
Promised in their faithful word ;
Now He shines, the long expected .
Let creation praise the Lord."

When we remember these things, our soul is poured out within us. We think,—It had been good for us to have been there, to have made one in that blessed company. Perhaps so, if our faith had been strong enough to comprehend the mystery,—to penetrate the veil of sense, and see the work of God. But it is not too late, if we would prove that such faith is ours. It is our assured hope that we are on the eve of the second Advent of our Lord. Be we sure that the circumstances of His first coming will repeat themselves. It is yet open to us to say, with blessed Mary, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word." If only we be faithful to that committed to us, whether in the affairs of the Church or of this world, it may yet be ours to see the glory of the Lord, and to hear the angels' song. Have we not seen His star in the east? Let the wise-hearted bring their gifts, and come to worship Him. Waiting for the consolation of Israel—dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple—it may be

revealed to us also by the Holy Ghost, that we shall not taste death until we have seen the Lord's Christ.

We are already in the midst of this wonderful antitype. We are singing our *Benedictus*, for the forerunner is born: the dayspring from on high hath visited us. But there shall yet be the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis*. A Church, virgin from the world, shall bring forth the manchild, and her soul shall magnify the Lord, and her spirit shall rejoice in God her Saviour. Simeon and Anna must wait yet forty days more; but when these are accomplished, their time also shall have come, and they shall sing, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

The Dignity of Christ.

Colossians i. 15-18, compared with Hebrews i. 1-4 and John i. 1, 3, 14, 18.

THESE three scriptures, so closely parallel one to the other, will profitably occupy our meditations to-day.

I. When the Apostle styles the Son of the Father's love (Col. i. 12, 13) "the image of the invisible God," we at once connect the phrase with that word of St. John—"No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." An image is a copy of an original, designed to represent and exhibit that original to others. If the copy be in stone or on canvas, it may be wrought by a third person. But a *living* image can only be produced by the original's self: it images him, because it is of him, because in it he reproduces himself. This is true in its measure of human fatherhood and sonship; it attains perfect truth when fatherhood and sonship are seen in God. Because one is God's Son, He is His image, and can say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."* And He is image in practical use as in ideal likeness. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."†

* John xiv. 9.

† Matt. xi. 27.

The same truth is taught in the words of the writer to the Hebrews. He styles God's Son "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person," or, rather, "substance." By the "brightness" of His glory He means not its reflection, but its effulgence, that which rays off from the central fire, the "light of light." We see the sun in heaven only by the beams from it which reach our eye: in like manner is the Only-Begotten, being of one substance with the Father, the revealer of the Father. And so as to the "express image"—that is, the imprint, the stamped character—of the Father's being. In begetting His eternal Son, God has reproduced Himself. The Son is all that the Father is, except as being the Father. He has received—or rather, eternally receives—the imprint: He does not give it. But, receiving it, He bears it in all its fulness, and bears it that we may see it and be blessed.

The Incarnation, then, so far as it was for the revealing of God, was no new attitude taken up, no new purpose carried out, by the Son of God. It was the expression of that which belongs to the very essence of His being, of that which is His because He is Son. Eternally God utters Him as His Word, and rays Him forth as His brightness: eternally He receives the imprint of the Father's being, and images, by so receiving, His inconceivable perfections. Yet we know not how to us that Word could have been audible and that brightness visible had He not become manifest in flesh, had not God given us the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. The Word was made flesh, and then we heard it: it tabernacled among us, and so we beheld its glory. The Son of God lived for a space in our midst the life which He lived with the Father before the world was: and by so



doing has, for all time, made that life possible for us. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifest unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."*

"Thanks be to God," we may well say, "for His unspeakable gift!" The world craves to know its Creator and Sustainer; man yearns to hear the voice to see the face, of his Ruler and Judge. God answers the yearning, and satisfies the craving: He gives us Jesus Christ. In that loveliest of lives, that tenderest of hearts, that holiest of spirits, He says: "Behold your God!" Are there any who yet cry, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"? The answer comes as of old from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth—"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" Happy we, if we have known Him. Then can we join in truth in our Christmas thanksgiving—"Through the mystery of the Incarnate Word Thou hast shined in upon our souls, and hast given us the light of the knowledge of Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ, God visible in flesh, that through Him we may know Thee and love Thee, who art invisible."

II. The Apostle next goes on to speak of the relation of God's Son to His creation. And about this he seems to have three things to say, expressed respec-

* 1 John i. 1-3.

tively by the phrases—"by Him," "in Him," "for. Him." Let us take them in order.

1. "All things were created by Him," writes St. Paul; and similarly we hear from St. John, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made," and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "by whom also He made the worlds." The word "by" in each place is the same, and has a very definite meaning. It signifies agency, instrumentality; he by whom a thing is done is not the original worker, but one secondary and derived. And so we hear One testifying—"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do": but He goes on, "for. what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."* The doing is as the being, and grows out of it. The Son is God of God; and therefore the Father made all things, but made them by the Son.

This as regards the language, which here, as everywhere else, is not, "He created all things;" but "all things were made by Him." The fact itself is one more revelation of the dignity of the Son of God. He is united with the Father in the origination of all things, of the universe; "without Him was not anything made that was made." The very angels, in their hierarchy of "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers," owe their being to Him: they were created by Him and for Him. We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible; and in One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things, visible and invisible, were made. Here, too, the Creeds of the Catholic Church follow closely the language of Holy Scripture.

* John v. 19.

2. The Apostle further ascribes to the Son of God, not the creating only, but the sustaining of the universe. "By Him" (or rather, *in* Him*) "all things consist." And so we have in the Epistle to the Hebrews—"upholding all things by the word of His power." The Creator is not to His creation as a past event—a being who once originated it, but to whom it now bears no living relation. It is rather to Him as a body to its soul: in Him it lives, and moves, and has its being; its "laws" are the expressions of His working, the manner of His going, and are changeless because He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It consists in Him; it is upheld by Him. Without His sustaining it would have no coherence or progression; it would fall to pieces like a house of cards. All this, which is obviously true of God, is predicated by the Apostle of God's Son. In this also "All things that the Father hath are mine"† is the canon of truth.

But the "in Him" has another aspect—that which is indicated by St. Paul in the phrase "first-born of every creature:" He justifies this title of the Son of God by saying, "for in Him" (this is again the truer rendering) "were all things created." This is a mystery; and we can but look at it as it is suggested by the Apostle. The Son, he seems to say, is the Archetype of the universe, the Beginning † of the creation of God. In Him all things began, as in Him all stand. He was before all things; but that He was—God of God—is, in some manner, an earnest and a pledge that all things shall be, that the creature shall follow upon the prior generation of its Head.

3. We pass into a clearer region when we come to

† John xvi. 15.

‡ ἀρχὴ (Rev. vi. 14).

the "for Him." "All things were created by Him, and for Him." This is the truth expressed by the writer to the Hebrews in the words: "whom He appointed" (or, constituted) "Heir of all things." The Son is the End of creation as its Beginning, its Object as its Author. Man was made its ruler because the Son of God was to become man; and man himself was made in the image of God that the Son of God might become man with all congruity. When the history of the world is over, and the eternal age has set in, the point in which the creature shall culminate will be the Son of God, inheriting all things and all things put under Him,—though that Son Himself shall be seen as subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

III. These are high themes, and beyond our present grasp. We had to touch them, as forming part of our text; and it may be well to have suggested them, as filling in the outline of our Saviour's glory. But we pass from them now, to consider the third division of the Apostle's description, that in which he states the relation of the Son of God to the new creation, to the spiritual universe —

"And He is the Head of the body, the Church, who is the Beginning, the First-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

When Jesus Christ our Lord had finished the work which was given Him to do, He prayed, "Now, O Father, glorify me with Thine own self, with the glory



which I had with Thee before the world was." Here we see somewhat of the answer to His prayer. He who was "First-born of every creature" is now "First-born from the dead;" He who made, sustains, inherits the natural universe is in like respects "Head of the body, the Church;" He by whom "all things" in heaven and earth were created is now He by whom "all things" in heaven and earth are reconciled. So in the New, as in the Old, He is the Beginning of the Creation of God. A race risen from death, an election knit in communion and fellowship, a world reconciled to its God, look to Him as their Head, and hold of Him as their Fountain of life. Here, also, all things are created by Him, and in Him, and for Him; all things consist in Him; all things are inherited by Him.

(Consider also Phil. ii. 5-11; Eph. i. 20-23).

These pictures have passed before us to-day, that, as we linger around the cradle at Bethlehem, we may think what it is we have found there. Behold, gathered up and sleeping (as it were) in that human babe, the image and brightness of God's glory, the Agent of creation, the Upholder and Inheritor of the universe. Behold, also, the germ of that which shall be—the First-born of resurrection, the Head of the body the Church, the Reconciler of the world. There is that of which He has emptied Himself, the riches of which He has become poor: * here is the glory which awaits Him, when He has by Himself purged our sins. Between the two He sleeps, lying on His mother's breast. What a spectacle for angels then! what a vision for us now! Fitly have we come with adoration, and worshipped the Lord. This is the Seed of the woman,

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

who shall bruise the serpent's head : this is Emmanuel, born of a virgin, God with us. This is He whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of the age to come, the Prince of peace. He has made good His claim to these lofty titles ; or, if there be anything in them which we have not yet seen, we have but to wait for it till His coming again. O Babe of Bethlehem, praised be God for Thee !

"Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it :
Break forth into singing, O forest, and every tree therein."

For ourselves, His Church and people, it remains, that as we stand around this cradle, we be converted and become as little children. That, as new-born babes, we desire the sincere milk of the word, that, as He grew, so we may grow thereby. That, as He lived, so we may live—one with Him in obedience, one with Him in sacrifice : and so at length increase to the measure of the stature of His fulness, and with Him fill creation with God's praise.

CIRCUMCISION.

The Circumcision made without hands.

Col. ii. 8-17.

HE who would rightly apprehend the circumcision of Christ must come to it with a mind instructed in the ordinance as it was known to the Fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.

However circumcision may otherwise have been known, it first became a religious rite in the instance of Abraham. He "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised."* It was a token of the covenant which God had made with him and with his seed after him. And when, four hundred and thirty years after, the Law was given from Sinai, circumcision became the pledge of obedience to its precepts—of the privilege of its blessings and of the liability to its cursings.†

But was the sign a mere arbitrary thing, or had it a significance of its own? Moses perceived the latter to be the truth when he said to the people—"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked;"‡ and again, speaking of the final conversion of Israel—"The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love

Rom. iv. 11. † Gal. v. 3. ‡ Deut. x. 16. Comp. Jerem. iv. 4.

the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."* Circumcision was thus already apprehended to signify "the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh." It admitted to the covenant of Abraham; but it showed at the same time what they must be who would truly be Abraham's seed. To be circumcised in flesh pledged to the keeping of the Law; but to be circumcised in heart alone made this in any degree possible. Moses implied what St. Paul afterwards expressed: "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."[†]

This was the circumcision of Christ. He submitted to the rite as a descendant of Abraham, as one "born under the Law."[‡] But His circumcision was of the heart, not of the flesh only,—in the spirit as well as in the letter; He was a Jew outwardly, but He was also a Jew inwardly. His heart was circumcised to love the Lord His God with all that was within Him, and so to fulfil the whole Law.[§] He put off the body of the sins of the flesh continually, and lived the life of the Spirit; and at length, in His death and resurrection, He accomplished the same in the whole man. "In that He died, He died unto sin; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."^{||}

We are likewise to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. And to be so buried and risen with Him is to be "circum-

* Deut. xxx. 6.

† Rom. ii. 28, 29.

‡ Gal. iv. 4.

§ Rom. xii. 10.

|| Ibid. vi.

cised with the circumcision made without hands the circumcision of Christ." We are to reckon ourselves thus circumcised because we have been baptized—so says the Apostle to both Romans and Colossians. In baptism is effected what by circumcision was signified, the death to sin, the new birth to righteousness. To all who have received the everlasting benediction of its heavenly washing the Apostle writes: "You, who were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath God quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses."

Let us believe this; but let us also realise it. The baptism which saves us is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God."* Circumcision was not the type of baptism, but of that regeneration of which baptism is the sacrament. And so the Apostle says—"We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."† He does not say, we who are baptized; but, we who are living the life into which baptism has admitted us. If, therefore, we would have part in that circumcision of Christ which at this time we are celebrating, let us see that we are as baptized indeed,— "dying daily" to sin, living daily to God.

And that we may so do, frequent we His holy table, with faithful hearts. They who truly partake of His flesh and blood who was circumcised and obedient to the law for man, shall bring forth the fruits of His righteousness in all holiness of heart and spirit.

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

† Phil. iii. 2, 3.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

The Name "Jesus Christ."

Matt. 1. 21. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus."

Ibid., ver. 16. "Jesus, who is called Christ."

SINCE the Circumcision was the name-day of our Lord, it seems well that at this season we should meditate somewhat on the name He then received. And we will add to it that further designation by which He is commonly known among men, and honoured by His people; we will think to-day of JESUS CHRIST.*

I. The name Jesus was no unknown one in Israel. There are instances of its use in the New Testament Scriptures:† and Jesus the son of Sirach is eminent among the Apocryphal writers. But for its first bearer we must go further back, and there we shall find the name in process of formation. St. Stephen, speaking of the entry into Canaan, says that the tabernacle of witness was brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles.‡ And the writer to the Hebrews, teaching that the rest there enjoyed was typical only, argues that "if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."§ It is obvious that in both places Joshua is intended; whence it follows that the Greek Jesus is the same as the Hebrew Joshua. Now the name Joshua

* Col. iv. 11.; Acts xiii. 6. † Acts vii. 45. ‡ Heb. iv. 8.

was expressly framed by Moses. The son of Nun was originally called Oshea: but Moses called him Jehoshua,* and this afterwards became contracted into Joshua. It stands, however, in its primary form to show us how it grew. "Oshea" by itself is saviour; the "Jeh" prefixed to it can hardly but come from Jehovah or Jah, the covenant name of God to Israel. •

And now, with these associations clustering round the name, it is given by the angel of God to the virgin's Son. It is given because of its significance: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." The "Oshea" of the name is His, because He is Saviour; but what does the "Jeh" import? This, at least, as in Joshua's case, that God is with Him to save by Him. But it may well mean what from other sources is known to be true, that He is Himself God our Saviour. And if so, then we may better understand the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah of which St. Matthew speaks. That the Son of Mary should be named Jesus is declared to accomplish that which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, *and shall call his name Emmanuel.*" The name of Jesus will truly correspond with that of Emmanuel, if while the one means "God with us," the other means "God with us to save."

But however this may be, the virgin's Son was certainly named Jesus because He was one who should save. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." What ideas were suggested to the shepherds by this title, what kind of saving they expected or would welcome,

it is not easy to say. By the mass of the people it is to be feared that Messiah was looked for as Saviour in the sense in which Othniel and Ehud bore that name,* as a deliverer from the oppression of a foreign yoke. Certainly the Pharisee knew of no other salvation as necessary or desirable: he who said in the temple, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are," could not have thought that he needed to be saved from his sins. But there were some at that time who were "looking for redemption in Jerusalem"; there were those whom the Baptist's voice should awaken, and whose hearts the water of his baptism of repentance should reach. These might know the worse than Roman tyranny into which sin had brought them, and long for deliverance from its yoke. Yet even these might well ask, "How shall this babe save us?"

They had but to wait a few years to behold Him lifted up between heaven and earth, confessing the guilt and bearing the burden of the sin of the whole world. Its load crushed Him into the grave; but, instead of lying there, He rose again triumphant, and ascended into heaven. Surely the burder must have fallen from Him, and therefore from all who are His; the guilt of sin need not cloud the conscience any more, nor its inevitable penalty make the future hopeless. And, as the Spirit who comes from Him instils this blessed conviction into the heart, in the same proportion is the power of sin weakened and its chain loosed. As the meaning of the Saviour's dying and rising again delivers from condemnation, so the fellowship of His suffering effects a death to sin, and the power of His resurrection quickens to newness of life.

* Judges iii. 9, 15 (marg.)

Sin no longer reigns in their mortal body, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof: it has no more dominion over them, for they are not under the law but under grace.*

Thus His name is indeed Jesus. "His people" after the flesh would not have Him to save them from their sins. But He has another people now, who are willing in the day of His power; and their testimony is that He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. To save them, not only from the consequences of their sins, from all disability and penalty they have brought upon them; but from the sins themselves, from the fascination of their deadly charm, from the yoke of their evil habit. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

II. We pass now to the name "Christ." It need hardly be said that this means "anointed." It may be seen in the passage from the second Psalm, as it is quoted in the New Testament. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against *His anointed*" becomes in the mouth of the infant Church, "against the Lord, and against *His Christ*. For of a truth" they say "against Thy holy child Jesus, *whom Thou hast anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together."†

It is no less familiar that the Greek word "Christ" corresponds to the Hebrew "Messiah." "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."‡ That this had become the standing name

*Rom. vi.

† Acts iv. 25-28.

‡ John i. 41.

among the Jews for the expected Deliverer is evident throughout the gospel narrative; and it is so with them to the present day. It rested, however, upon a single passage only of their scriptures, that of the prophecy of the seventy weeks given to Daniel.* It would seem to be of special Divine guidance that a name thus once mentioned should have become in all lips the title of Him who was to come; containing, as it does, such rich suggestion of His functions.

Now the idea of anointing is that of consecration to office. Oil was poured, by God's ordinance, upon His prophets, priests, and kings, to induct them into their calling. Concerning prophets we read—"Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shalt thou *anoint* to be prophet in thy room."† The anointing of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood is minutely prescribed in the Book of Leviticus.‡ And the allusions to anointing in the case of the kings Saul, David, and Solomon are too numerous and indeed too familiar to need particularising.§

That He who was to come should be Messiah, the anointed of God, meant therefore that He should fill all these offices, and be solemnly consecrated thereto. The same indeed was to be gathered from other scriptures. Moses told of Him as the *prophet* whom God would raise up from among His brethren like unto himself.|| David sang of Him as the *priest* after the order of Melchisedec. Zechariah was made to express the force of this title, saying, "He shall be a priest *upon His throne*."¶ And Jeremiah completes the picture of

* Ch. ix. 25, 26. † 1 Kings xix. 16. ‡ Ch. viii.

§ See 1 Sam. x. 1; xvi. 12, 13; 2 Sam. ii. 4; 1 Kings i. 39.

|| Deut. xviii. 18. ¶ Zech. vi. 12, 13.

royalty—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a *king* shall reign and prosper and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR **RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"* Israel therefore looked for Messiah as Prophet, Priest, and King; and that Jesus is the Christ means that He is one and all to us, and that God has anointed Him to fulfil their functions. It only remains that we enquire when He assumed these offices, and when and how He was anointed for them.

I. St. Peter tells Cornelius "how God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with Him."† And that to which he referred is identified by the same Jesus Himself, when, coming to Nazareth, He read in the synagogue from the prophecy of Isaiah—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath *anointed* me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."‡ There can be no doubt that the anointing spoken of in these passages was the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him after His baptism; nor that the office to which it consecrated Him was that of prophet,—declarer of God, actor and speaker for Him. It was a prophet's words that He took to Himself—"The Spirit of the Lord hath *anointed* me"; it was a prophet's work that He did in Israel from the time that He, "being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan."§ And that it was "in

* Jer. xxiii. 5.

† Acts x. 38.

‡ Luke iv. 18.

§ Ibid. iv. 1.

the power of the Spirit" * as then received that He acted and spoke for God as His prophet is plainly manifest. Not only did He tarry to begin His public ministry until thus endued with power from on high:† but He Himself declared that it was by the Spirit of God that He cast out devils;‡ and His forerunner testified of Him—"He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him."§

II. But we read of a later anointing of the Spirit which came upon Him, namely, at His ascension; and it is told of by the same Apostle. "Being" he said on the Day of Pentecost "by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost,|| He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."¶ He was made Lord by exaltation, and Christ by receiving the Holy Ghost. And to this the disciples doubtless referred when they said "Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed."**

Now of this anointing of His we say, that it was to priesthood and kingship, which in Him—as in His type Melchisedec—are one. "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."†† He began indeed before then to manifest that both priesthood and kingship were in Him. But

* Ibid. ver. 14.

† John ii. 11.

‡ Matt. xii. 38.

§ John iii. 34. || Comp. Acts i. 4. and Ps. lxviii. 18 with Eph. iv. 8.

¶ Acts ii. 33, 36.

** Ibid. iv. 27.

†† Heb. viii. 1, 2.

'it is expressly declared that "if He were on earth He should not be a priest."'* He was not one by His birth of the virgin; for therein "our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."† He was born Priest in His resurrection,—as it is written "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee."‡ That "this day" is the day of His resurrection is declared by St. Paul. "God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.'§ Thus His priesthood is "not after the law of a carnal commandment," as by natural descent from Aaron, "but after the power of an endless life."|| Born into that life in resurrection, and anointed at His ascension, He entered then, not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figure of the true, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. If He be a priest, "it is of necessity that He have somewhat to offer."¶ And that "somewhat" is the true thing of which the high priest's sprinkling of the blood in the holy places made with hands is the figure. It is the presenting Himself before the throne, "a Lamb as it had been slain," the continual memorial of His sacrifice once offered on earth. In the original slaying of that sacrifice He was the victim; but in its continual representation He is the Priest. And out of His hands also ascends the sweet incense; for "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."**

* Ibid. ver. 4.

† Ibid. vii. 14.

‡ Heb. v. 5.

§ Acts xiii. 33. || Heb. vii. 16. ¶ Ibid. viii. 3. ** Ibid. vii. 25.

III. Nor was it to priesthood only that the Scripture declares Him to have been begotten in His resurrection. It is because of the "Thou art my Son" which on that day received its fulfilment that God calls Him "My King," and declares Him set as such on His holy hill of Zion.* He is king and priest after the ancient order, as the "first-born among many brethren."† And to this kingship also He was anointed in the full gift of the Spirit bestowed on Him at His ascension, when on His coronation day all the angels of God were bidden to worship Him; and the song was sung—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."†

It is impossible to contemplate these things as they are in our Lord, without inquiring what part we, His Church and people, have in them.

It is certain that we also are anointed, and with the same oil of the Holy Ghost. "He which establisheth us with you in Christ," writes St. Paul, "and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."§ And St. John declares—"Ye have an unction," a chrism, an anointing "from the Holy One."|| The connection with sealing in the first passage indicates that this anointing comes to us in the laying on of Apostles' hands.¶ And its result in us, as in Him, is priesthood and kingship. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal

* Psalm ii.

† Rom. viii. 29.

‡ Heb. i. 3-9.

§ 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

|| 1 John ii. 20.

• ¶ Comp. Eph. i. 13 with Acts xix. 1-9.

priesthood" is St. Peter's word to the Church.* "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests" is the ascription to the Lamb of His redeemed ones.† For our anointing is that of His ascension, not that of His baptism. The oil which at Pentecost flowed down to the skirts of His garment was that which had just before been poured on His head:‡ "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." It does anoint the Church to be the prophetess of God with Him; but this because priest and prophet are no longer distinct offices, and coincide in all.

The oil of this anointing is, we say, the Holy Ghost. Not that it is the first time that the Spirit has visited us, and made us the subject of His operations. But when He came before, He came under the symbol of water, not of oil. Water is for cleansing, for drink, for fertilising. Of the first we read—"He saved us by the *washing* of regeneration and *repeweing* of the Holy Ghost."§ Of the second—"We have all been *made* to *drink* into one Spirit" "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and *drink*. . . . This spake He of the Spirit, which they who believed on Him should receive."|| Of the third—"the love of God is *shed* abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given us."¶ In all it is as the Spirit of Jesus the Saviour that the Comforter comes to us. But anointing is for knowledge and discernment, for glory and strength. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye *know* all things." "The anointing which ye have received

* 1 Pet. ii. 9. † Rev. v. 10. Comp. i. 6. ‡ Psalm cxxxiii.

§ Tit. iii. 5. || 1 Cor. xii. 13; John vii. 37-39. ¶ Rom. v. 5; Heb. vi. 7.

abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."* The Church is "anointed" as Jesus was "with the Holy Ghost and with power," that she may go about doing good as He did. This is the work of the Spirit of *Christ*, the minister of God. He comes as oil, not to make the new creature, but to "enrich it in all utterance and in all knowledge . . . so that it may come behind in no gift" whereby God's work may be done. And so chrism is used at the laying on of hands, but water in baptism. We receive baptism first, and afterwards chrism. We begin with the Lord as Jesus, and then follow on to know Him as Christ.

It is well that we should so follow on, and not stop short at the name Jesus. But let us never lose hold of that name, with all that it imports; or we shall fail to reach the Christ. It is those who love righteousness and hate wickedness, as saved by Him, who shall be anointed with the oil of gladness with Him, as His fellows. Our witness to the Church at large is that she is wanting in the oil: let us see that we lack not the water. Apostles, as their ministering draws to its close, have set the water by the threshold of the churches to say this to us. On the verge of being called to go up to mount Zion, it speaks to us as of old—"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart*; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

The Youth of Jesus.

Luke ii. 41-52.

“IN stature grows the Holy Child.” This is the keynote of all that is special in to-day’s services. The gospel* ends by telling us that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. And it gives us some glimpses into the surroundings amid which this growth took place, and by which it was favoured.

The first of these glimpses is afforded by the scene among the doctors of the law in the temple. There is a not uncommon misunderstanding of this transaction, which supposes that the boy Jesus was, from the height of His superior wisdom, instructing the masters in Israel. The language of the narrative lends no countenance to such a view. He was found “in the temple, sitting among the doctors, *both hearing them and asking them questions.* And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and ‘answers.’ The learned in the Law of Moses sat there to teach, to catechize, and to give any information which might be asked for. Jesus gladly availed Himself of the opportunity, and was among them as other learners. He grew in wisdom as in stature because He availed Himself of every opportunity of

being taught. He had already come to the consciousness of who He was, and knew that He must be about His Father's business. But that business was then to learn. Not till eighteen more years had passed over His head was He to stand forth as a Teacher sent from God, speaking the very words of God, because God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him.* Now He was learning. He came to those who sat in Moses' seat, assured that the knowledge they dispensed was the very truth of God. The Father had so ordered it, in shaping the circumstances of the earthly life of His Son. He had prepared a body for Him,--a nation and a church in which the true God was worshipped, and His genuine law known. Thus the forms of truth surrounded Him from His infancy; and the best food the world had then received, the writings of Moses and the prophets, nourished His budding life. From hence He learnt His Father's mind and will. "I have more understanding than all my teachers," He could indeed say: but He went on—"for Thy testimonies are my meditation." And again—"I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts."

Herein we see one of the means of the growth in wisdom of the Holy Child. Another, and one at least not less important, is hinted at in the words, "He went down with His parents and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." That the nation into which God's Son incarnate was born should be worshippers of the true God was highly necessary. But what a needs-be there also was for purity in the family life in which His early years were spent! That the Father chose and fashioned Israel to be His people,

* John iii. 34.

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we are sure; we are not less sure that He chose and fashioned Mary of Nazareth to be His mother.

We can hardly express all that we owe to this blessed one among women. If it were only that she had such faith, and was so replenished with grace, that she should become the mother of the Lord, we might well make special commemoration of her; and with the holy angel, and with the Church in all generations, might call her blessed. But it belongs to the mother, not only to give birth to her child, but to bring it up. Let any mother, let anyone who knows what a mother's work is, think of all which this means; and then when we thank God for the child Jesus, we shall sometimes thank Him also for Mary His mother. What faith, what piety of heart must have been hers,—what "white flower of a blameless life" must she have worn, who was that holy Child's first teacher and daily example. His early years were, under God, what she made them. Let us cherish her name, and keep her memory green among us. There is no fear of our giving her that undue exaltation which has been one of the mistakes of the Church in the absence of Apostles. But let us not ignore the truth at the centre of this accretion of error. Next Sunday's gospel will show us at Cana of Galilee how little she had to do with the ministry and work of her Son. To-day there is no "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" but instead—"He went down with His parents, and was subject unto them: but Mary kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

"In stature grows the Holy Child." So we think of Him to-day, whose nativity and circumcision we have just been celebrating. We make no curious effort to

lift the veil of silence with which scripture reverently covers those thirty years. In the hymn we sing, we express our sense of the mystery, and turn at once to the practical conclusion :—

“ O Jesu ! by Thy grace incline
Our hearts Thy steps to trace :
And by Thy lowliness Divine
Our haughtiness abase.”

In the temple at Jerusalem, in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, we see enough for example to us all—example especially to children and to all under teaching and authority, which a life-time may well be spent in learning to follow. That we may do so in His strength, eat we of His Body, drink we of His Blood : that, as He lived by the Father, even so we may live by Him, and bring forth fruit to the praise and glory of His Name.

The Two Wills in Christ.

THE full doctrine of the Incarnation was not established in the Church without many contentions with opposing heresies. Against Arius it had to be maintained that the Word who was made flesh was no creature, however exalted, but very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father. Against Apollinaris it was necessary to prove that the flesh taken into union by the Son of God was not body only, or body and soul only, but body, soul, and spirit : that the Incarnate One was perfect man as He was perfect God. Against Nestorius the truth of the oneness of person in Him had to be

fought for, against Eutyches the not inferior truth of the duality of natures : that the Divine Person, the Son of God, took human nature into union with Himself, and not a human person ; but that in that union the two natures, Divine and human, remained without admixture or confusion. Thus was established, as Hooker says, the verity summed up, in the four words "*Truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly* ;"—the true-ness* of His Godhead, the perfectness of His Manhood, the indivisibleness of His Person, the distinctness of His Natures. Or we may put it in the words of the Creed of St. Athanasius—" Perfect God, and perfect Man. Although God and Man: yet not two, but One Christ. One, not by confusion of Substance,† but by unity of Person."

But there was one more struggle to be gone through ere the doctrine of the Incarnation received its full expression, and the Church could leave the ramparts of controversy for the inner chamber of peaceful contemplation. The error which occasioned this last contention takes its name, not from its author, but from its substance. It is known as the Monothelite heresy: it consisted in the assertion that there was but one will in Christ, the Divine will, in which the human will was swallowed up and lost.

Let us try and understand what is the truth upon this subject, and also what is the practical value of its due appreciation in the Church.

By "will" we mean the determination of the whole being towards having or doing something. It is not the same as "wish." Wish is the result of appetite, or desire: it is involuntary: it arises at the sight of

* That is "reality."

† That is, "nature."

the pleasant without regard to its lawfulness, or even its possibility: it is "the will's solicitor," but it is not the will itself. Reason oftentimes comes in to counteract the solicitations of appetite. It may be pleasant indeed, it says, but it is not lawful; or it may be lawful, but it is not expedient; or it may be both lawful and expedient, but it is not possible. The will is the result of the final judgment we pass, after appetite has been felt and reason has been heard. It is, as we said, the determination of the whole being towards having or doing something.

Now it is obvious that as there is but one God, there can be only one will of God. There may be—as there are—three Persons in the one Godhead; but it is impossible that the will, that is, the determination of the being of any one of these should be different from that of the other two. The will of the Father is of necessity the will also of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, who are God because He is God. On the other hand it is no less obvious that the will of man is distinct from the will of God, and may be diverse from it. It is so because human nature is other than Divine nature, and so may determine in a contrary direction therefrom. Hence we see that will belongs not to person but to nature. There are three Persons in the Godhead, three who can say "I"; but there are not three wills, but one. In the Incarnate Son there is but one Person, the Divine, one only who can say "I"; but there are two wills, two determinations of being, the one identical with that of the Father, the other belonging to the humanity; two wills, distinct, *in their nature* possibly diverse, and if in harmony not of necessity but by grace.

The error on this subject arose from the preceding

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heresy of Eutyches, who confounded the two natures in Christ. Monothelitism was the expiring flash of Monophysitism in the Church. If indeed humanity in the Incarnate One had been swallowed up in Deity, so that it no longer existed with its own properties; if transubstantiation, untrue in the Supper, were true in the Lord, we might likewise assent to the abolishment of His human will. But with the abiding distinctness of nature goes the abiding distinctness of that determination of nature which we call "will." So that it is part of the Catholic Faith, part of the "rightly believing the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ," that we acknowledge in Him, as two distinct natures, so two distinct wills.

That this doctrine is no mere question of words, but a living and practical truth, appears when we contemplate by means of it the life of our Lord Himself, and our own life in Him.

I. It is all-important for our study of the blessed life which the holy Gospels record, that we should have a vivid sense of its *reality*. Anything which robs it of its truly human character, which throws over it a visionary air, which makes the manhood of the Lord a mere lifeless garment which He carried about with Him, under which and through which the actions of Deity might be seen and known,—any thought of this kind makes His life so far of less value to us. That, when the example of Christ is cited, the reply should be "Oh ! but He was God," is just a putting ourselves out of His reach, and refusing to look upon that which would heal us. He was indeed God; but that did not prevent His being real and true man, one whose every thought and word and action are ours His brethren, a pattern to shape ourselves withal, a measure to try

ourselves thereby, an ideal to lift ourselves thereto, till we too come to a perfect man, to the stature of His fulness. . That He had a human will to keep in (if not to bring to) conformity with the Divine is of infinite importance to us, who have the same task set us, and can only accomplish it in His strength and in His steps. • •

II. For ours is the same task, to be conformed unto the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For this indeed we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Such transformation Christ our Lord accomplishes, by uniting us to Himself. Whosoever is in Him is a new creature. We are not incarnations of Deity, as He was: the Divine will is in nature outside us, and the human will only is our own. But the task is the same:—

“Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.”

The two must be distinct, but they need not be divergent. The wish will indeed go its own way, and solicit the will to that which the judgment rejects. But this it did even in the incarnate One. “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.” And again, “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.” The “will” which here He abnegates is the wish,—the shrinking of flesh and spirit from the horror of the Passion. But the will of the whole man declares itself in the determinate choice, “Not my will, but Thine.” So let it be with us; and the prophecy shall be fulfilled which saith, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

The Changing of the Water into Wine.

Rom. xii. 6-16. John ii. 1-11.

DURING the past week our thoughts have been directed to the contemplation of the Holy Child, Jesus—His holy obedience and subjection to His parents—His humble submission of Himself to the instruction of the doctors in the temple that He might *learn* His Father's business. To-day the gospel presents Him to us as anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power to *do* His Father's business. And the touches of nature that are to be seen as we gaze upon the picture in the gospel endear Him to us as a friend that *sticketh* closer than a brother, who has human sympathies, human affections in common with ourselves. He whose delights were ever with the sons of men—He who was ever ready to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep—He, who had come to give Himself for His Church that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church and bride, received an invitation to the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee, and accepted it. He who came to destroy the works of the devil confirmed the institutions of His Father's appointment. He whose soul abhorred that which is evil but clavé to that which is good threw the halo of His presence round marriage, the first divinely-appointed institution for the blessing of man. By His acceptance

of the invitation to the marriage-feast, and by His working His first miracle and manifesting forth His glory there, and not in any sacred assembly, we learn that those occupations and relations of ordinary daily life which we are accustomed to call "secular" are invested with a *sacred* character in His eyes. From it parents may learn to teach their children that the bright happiness of innocent mirth shall be in that playground to which Jesus is invited. They that are engaged in the business of this world shall surely not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and rejoicing in hope, if Jesus be invited to their company. The work of the worker shall be well and honestly done, if the presence of Jesus be asked for and acknowledged: and that service shall be a true and acceptable one which is rendered not with eye-service as men-pleasers but as unto Christ. He invites us to *His* House; can we do less than invite Him to *our* houses, homes, and social and festive gatherings? Happy are they who can ever say " Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings." They surely shall have many an earnest of His presence with them until they see Him at His coming.

The gospel further shows how He administered to the enjoyment of those to whose company He had been invited. He could Himself thoroughly enter into the joy of the bridegroom; for the bridegroom's joy was the type of the joy set before Him, and the marriage-feast was a prefiguring of the marriage supper at which He should preside. The enjoyment of all He could fully sympathize with, especially as He looked upon His disciples who accompanied Him, and saw in them the nucleus of the great body of those who should hereafter be gathered and drawn into holy union with Himself.

It had been manifested previously to the circumstance recorded in the gospel that Jesus had been sent of the Father to do His will and to work His works. "The words," said He, "that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself," and "the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works," and again, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Mary, the mother of Jesus, saith unto Him, "They have no wine." He addresses her in terms of deep and tender respect. He is no longer however to stand before men as the son of Joseph and Mary, but as He that was sent forth of the Father to do the work He had given Him to do. He had been trained for the work of the ministry upon which He had now entered under the humble roof of Joseph and Mary. Now in the eyes both of God and man He was no longer under parental control. His duty now to God His Father was not *mediately* through His earthly parents, but *immediately* and *directly*. Upon His Father does He now wait continually in His ministry to do His bidding. *His* hour is the time of His Father's appointment. "Woman," said He to His mother, "what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." Such was His sympathy with the joys of the human heart that He undoubtedly longed with Mary that that which was wanting to the enjoyment of the feast might be supplied. But He waited on His ministry. He seeks neither His own will nor His own time, but His Father's, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps. It may be in our hearts, and in our power, to minister blessing of some kind to others; but the waiting on our ministry includes the waiting for God's authority and His time for the carrying out any act of ministration, if we desire the manifestation of the glory of Jesus therein. Mary

could wait patiently His hour, and instructed the servants to wait on their ministry, that when He should give the word for anything to be done they should at once do it. At length when the command came, their work of ministry was very simple—very simple indeed; but it was the preparation for the manifestation of the glory of Jesus. From this we ourselves may gather encouragement, and know that if we are waiting upon the ministry the Lord has committed to us—whether in a small and limited sphere, or in a large and more extended sphere—whether in the Church, the family, or the business of this world, we are making preparation for the manifestation of the glory of Jesus.

• We assemble together to-day before God's altar to wait on our ministry of offering our unbloody sacrifice, acceptable to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. This feast is an earnest of the marriage-feast that yet shall be. Jesus is present in our midst to bless us and manifest forth His glory, for His hour is come to do so. Under the veil of earthly things we have now communion with Him, and by outward sign and symbol do we manifest our faith in His presence. At Cana's feast they had nought to offer Him but water; but He used that for His own glory and their blessing. In this feast we have nought to offer Him save what is already His; but He will use that which we present to Him to His own honour and glory and our blessing. He shall minister to us therefrom the Bread of everlasting life and the Cup of eternal salvation. And if we will continually present ourselves to Him a living sacrifice He will at length manifest forth His glory in us, when His hour shall have come—the hour to which He reserves the best wine for His beloved—the hour of which no man knoweth; no, not the angels which

are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Then shall He so manifest forth His glory that His ancient people, who hitherto have rejected Him, shall believe on Him.

The Marriage of the Lamb.

Rev. xix. 6-9.

The marriage at Cana of Galilee, which forms the prominent feature of to-day's services, naturally leads our thoughts forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb,—to that marriage which a certain King has made for His Son. Let this latter accordingly now form our subject of meditation.

Two questions arise out of the passage of scripture which heads this reading, the answer to which will convey its whole meaning. Who is the Bride? and—what is the marriage?

1. Who is the Bride?

From the beginning of the work of Jesus Christ it was intimated that His relation with His own would be that of a husband with his wife. When John's disciples came and told him that all were flocking to Jesus, he replied, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled."* St. Paul, accordingly, when speaking of the marriage relation as that in which two are one flesh, adds— "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."†

* John iii. 26-30.

† 1 Cor. vi. 17.

And in his Epistle to the Ephesians he sets forth the relation of Christ and the Church as the very type and ground of all wedded union.* "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." "As the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

It is thus the calling of the baptized as such to be of the Bride of the Lamb, though here also there are many called, but few chosen. As truly as the Church is the household of God, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Ghost, so truly is she the Bride, the Lamb's wife,—in spirit now, in fulness hereafter. There have been in the several stages of her history great varieties of both the form and the degree of the spiritual life. But these differences are lost in the one relation of loving union which all the faithful bear to their Head and Lord. In the unity of the Bride all the baptized are one. No member of Christ from the beginning to the end but has his place in her fellowship, if only he love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Apostles, prophets, martyrs: saints of the middle ages and Protestants of the Reformation; the actors in the revivals of the latter days and the last witnesses in the fires of the great tribulation, and with them many an unnoted one, shall swell the goodly throng in the day when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come, and His wife has made herself ready.

This is what the Bride is. We shall know her the better by apprehending what she is not.

First, she is not the whole company of the saved, the entire assemblage of all whose names are written in

the book of life. In the new earth, "the nations of them that are saved" shall walk in the light of the heavenly city, which is the Bride, the Lamb's wife: * but they are distinct from her. They are "nations" still; and the first among them shall be Israel, re-united and restored to the land of their fathers. But the Church has been an election out of all nations, Jew and Gentile. She is the result of that dealing of God of which it is said that He visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name, † whom He joined to the "remnant" of Israel that believed, making of twain one new man. ‡ She will then have attained the height of her calling in the first resurrection,—the resurrection of those that are Christ's at His coming, a thousand years before the end when the rest of the dead live again. As a man chooses his wife, so will the Lord Christ be seen to have elected His Church out of mankind to be peculiarly His,—His nearest and dearest, His help-meet. The tale of His chosen ones is now complete; and henceforth no other creature can enter into this highest of human callings. "There are three-score queens and four-score concubines, and virgins without number: my dove, my undefiled, is one." There is nothing invidious in such election,—nothing partial on God's side, or slighting to the rest of mankind. It implies that a man values womankind at large, not that he despises all others, if he chooses one woman to be his wife. So Christ commends His love to all men, in that He chooses some to be specially His. Moreover, the Church is chosen, not so much for her own sake, as that she may be the means of

* Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 24.

† Acts xv. 14.

‡ Eph. ii. 11-15; iii. 3-6.

blessing to all. The new Jerusalem shall be what the old was called, "the joy of the whole earth."

And, secondly, the Bride is not the first-fruits as distinct from the harvest of the earth. That such a first-fruit will be gathered, and that their designation thereto is the sealing by the laying on of Apostles' hands, is certain.* But it is in baptism, not in sealing, that we are joined to the Lord as one spirit, and made bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh as Eve of Adam's.† We can never come nearer to Christ than we are brought in baptism. The Holy Communion but cements that union; and all growth in grace is the flower and fruit of it. The sealing endows the life thus given with the powers of the world to come; but it does not add to the life itself or draw closer the union. So, if we who are sealed to be of the first-fruits are to be of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, it can only be in common with our brethren of the baptized; for it is in virtue of that which we share with them. They are of the household of God even as we; they are of the Body of Christ even as we; they are of the Temple of the Holy Ghost even as we; and they shall be of the Bride of the Lamb even as we. The sealing may indeed fit us to be elder brothers in that family, and more active and honourable members in that Body,—unworthy as we are: it brings also the promise of being made pillars in the temple, and like Jachin and Boaz sustaining it in its beauty and its strength.‡ But in the love of the Bride, children, members, stones, lose all distinctions, and are fused into one homogeneous mass, one sentient creature, to whom the heavenly

* See Fifth Sunday after Easter. † Eph. v. 29, 30; Gen. ii. 23.

‡ Rev. iii. 12.

Bridegroom is all in all. It is the calling of the whole Church; and she has the earnest of it even now in her baptismal union with her Lord. The sealing is the earnest of the glory; [¶] but of the new creature which receives the glory, the Eve of the paradise of God, baptism itself conveys to our spirits the first-fruits and the pledge. [†]

¶ II. And now,—what is the marriage of the Lamb?

It is not anything which takes place in this present age, or into which we enter as individuals. It is not our baptismal joining to the Lord as one spirit with Him: it is not our departing to be with Christ should we fall asleep before His return. It is something which comes to the Church as one body; and the time of it is after Babylon falls, and on the eve of the judgment upon Antichrist, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming. [‡] It is the resurrection of those that are Christ's at this coming of His [§] which makes the marriage possible; which gathers them together with the changed living ^{||} in one glorious company, and robes them in the wedding-garment of fine linen, white and clean. When Antichrist is destroyed, and Satan bound, they are seen reigning with Christ as the Queen upon His throne; and it is said, "This is the first resurrection." [¶]

To the same effect is the testimony of other scriptures. In the Epistle to the Ephesians St. Paul exhibits the mystery of marriage as showing forth that union which is betwixt Christ and His Church. But if his words be attentively considered, it will be seen that he

* Eph. i. 13, 14; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

† Rom. viii. 22; 2 Cor. v. 1-5. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 8. § 1 Cor. xv. 23.

|| Ibid. ver. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17. ¶ Rev. xx. 4-6.

contemplates the wifehood of the Church as only incipient as yet. Christ's present work is to "sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," that one day He may be able to present it to Himself as a bride to her bridegroom, "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish." To use the language of the old creation (as the Apostle himself goes on to do), the Church is now being formed out of Christ, as Eve was formed out of Adam. "We are of"—that is, out of—"His flesh and of His bones." Hereafter God will bring to the second Adam the woman He has made for Him, that she may be His help-meet. The same truth is indicated by the figure of betrothal used by St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians. "I have espoused you" he says "to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."* As an ambassador for his Master, he has effected the betrothal; but the marriage has yet to come, and the bride's part now is to make herself ready. When her preparation is complete, in the change of her vile body into the likeness of her Bridegroom's glorious body, then the bridal day shall dawn.

But this is *when* the marriage shall be; we have not yet said *what* it is. That indeed no tongue can tell, no words can paint. The seeing Him as He is, the being made like unto Him, the change into His image from glory unto glory, the full communion, the fellowship in work and joy—all that the highest wedded union of man and woman can be, but sublimed into heaven's own perfectness,—this is the marriage of the Lamb.

"O happy, happy bride !
Thy widowed hours are past ;
The Bridegroom at thy side,
Thou art His own at last !
The sorrows of thy former cup
In full fruition swallowed up !"

Third Sunday after Circumcision.

To be of this Bride of the Lamb is the calling of all who are baptized into Jesus Christ. Let us not be content with anything short of it. We are called to be Christ's, as Christ is God's; to share His mind, to drink into His spirit, to see with His eyes and feel with His heart. He has betrothed us to Himself; and we must prepare to be His help-meet in the ages to come, the sharer of His throne of blessing. Let this thought dwell in us day by day, that we may grow more and more into conformity to His image and acquaintance with His ways; that so, when the bridal day shall come, He may find us a true partner of all His work and all His joy, able to sympathize with Him and to understand Him, fit to be trusted with His deepest counsels and employed on His weightiest matters. How would it be with an earthly maiden, were she told that the noblest man in all the land had chosen her to be his future wife? Such anticipation, such preparation, such high aspiring and awful joy should be ours whom He has elected to be His, who is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

Spiritual Leprosy.

Matt. viii. 1-4.

LEPROSY is in many points a type of sinfulness. But there is one feature in which the two are very dissimilar. No one who was leprous could be ignorant of the fact that somewhat was wrong with him. It was indeed for the priest to discern whether it was the true plague or no. But there it was in any case differencing him from his fellows, a thing to be burdened with, a mischief from which deliverance must be sought.

It was otherwise once with sin. Man dwelt as it were in a vast lazaret-house, where there was no cleanliness in any to convince of uncleanness the others around him. He knew not the plague of his own heart; for there was no health to compare it with, and we only know light by its contrast with darkness. And therefore God sent him, first the law which told of Himself, and then the living law, the very Image of the Father, which revealed Him. The law convinced of sin. It told man of another life beside the leprous one; and called upon him to rise into it. Man could not but respond to the call. He acknowledged that the life presented to him was his own true existence; he felt ashamed that he was not living it; and yet he did not the thing he would. He could but shave his head, and cover his lip, and cry, unclean, unclean.

The living law, as embodied in Jesus Christ, no less convinced of sin,—indeed, rather more. By the written law we hear of the better life by the hearing of the ear,—but now our eyes behold it; wherefore we abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. But there is something in His eyes which overcomes the shame of defilement by the hope of cleansing. Every spiritual leper who has seen Him by faith has cried out, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” And to every one so crying He has answered, “I will; be thou clean.” Nor has He said it only: but, putting forth His hand, has touched the corrupted flesh, and it has come again as the flesh of a little child. To touch a leper of old was not to help him, but to partake of his uncleanness. But the touch of the Holy One of God incurs no defilement, and rather purifies. It was so when He took our fallen nature: it was so when in that nature, cleansed by His assumption of it, He walked among men. He bare our sins without partaking of them: He healed us of the plague without its contagion coming near to Him. He, the King of men, stood then and stands now among them; and by His royal touch cures of their evil all who come to Him for aid.

And we come to Him still. Privileged to feed on His very substance, we yet pray as we do so—

“Cleanse us, unclean, with Thy most cleansing blood:”

and again—“that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed in His most precious Blood.” Our access to the Sacrament is made with the “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean:” and the Sacrament itself is the Lord touching us, saying, “I will: be thou clean.” Only let us see,

that the cleaſhing we seek is one indeed. It would have availed the leper but little that his disabilities were removed, that he was permitted to re-enter the camp, and mix with his fellows. Unless the plague disappeared from his flesh, the boon was but nominal: the substance of the evil would still shuc him off, though no outward restriction barred him. And so with the spiritual leprosy of sinfulness. We seek not so much for the penalty of sin to be remitted, as for sin itself to be abolished, its body to be destroyed in us, that henceforth we should no more serve it. This it is we seek from every touch of our Saviour's gracious hand; and this it is He gives. His touch assures of forgiveness, indeed; but at the same time it conveys remission: the disease is healed as the guilt is pardoned. Come we, then, and show ourselves to the priests of God, that they may satisfy us and all others that we are cleansed indeed. Come we and offer the gift that the Apostle has commanded,* even the presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice, for a testimony unto all that God in Christ has healed us of a truth.

Bearing one another's Burdens.

Gal. vi. 2, 5.

"BEAR ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ . . . Every man shall bear his own burden."

To almost every truth there are two opposite sides, —so opposite, that they may even seem contrary the one to the other. The greater the thinker, the more

* Rom. xii. 1.

will his writings abound in such seeming contradictions. He sees both sides of the truth, and not one side only: but he commonly sees only one side at a time, and feels strongly, and expresses without qualification, what he sees. Hence he appears inconsistent where lesser men may be credited with consistency. Nor should we attempt to "harmonize," as men say, the two seemingly opposite truths. We shall be apt to do this by standing half way between the two, and so losing the significance of either; by smoothing away the apparent incongruities, and getting a feeble compromise which gives no food or satisfaction. The truth does not lie so much between the two, as at the root of both; it is deeper, not intermediate. Our safest course is to give each its full weight and value; and, assured of no real contradiction, to refuse to reduce the sublime discords to a common-place harmony. They shall be resolved, ere long, into a concord of God's own framing, which shall be the more grateful for that through which we have expected it.

It is needless to refer to other illustrations of this matter, such as the apparent inconsistency between God's fore-knowledge and our free will. The subject has been introduced because of what St. Paul says in the passages which have been cited. "Bear ye one another's burdens," he writes; and yet—"every man must bear his own burden." The two sound contradictory. But we are assured they are both true, and each deserves consideration on its own merits.

First, "every man must bear his own burden." Is it not only too true? However entire our sympathy one with another, there are yet depths in each one of us which none but himself can sound. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man

which is in Him?" Human beings are like a series of circles drawn upon paper. They may approach one another more or less nearly; some may even touch, and some actually intersect. But no one is so completely super-imposed upon the other, that their centres coincide; that their point of view is the same, and the range of their experience and the radiation of their sympathies quite identical. The closest friendship, the very welding together of wedded love, will not effect this. As, probably, no two atoms in the universe absolutely touch; so, certainly, no one individual can get so close to another that nothing be reserved from mutual knowledge. Each soul is ultimately alone.

More especially is this so as regards the sorrows and the sins which constitute our "burdens." That "the heart knoweth its own bitterness" is even more true than that "a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy." How shall we place ourselves in the exact position of one whose heart is aching or whose conscience is burdened? How shall we ourselves make plain our own case, even to the tenderest physician, unless he has shared precisely the same experience; and this is impossible. Would we indeed do so if we could? Is there any human eye, however utterly trusted, to which we would bare our inmost thoughts for a day together? Nay, God reserves this for Himself. He only knows the creature He has made in His own image: even that in the creature which is not after His own likeness He knows, for He has taken flesh for this very end. Isolated as we are in the last resort from every human contact, we still have God. No one who knows how to speak to Him, and has learnt the language in which His answer comes back, need be utterly alone.

So true, then, is this,—that every man must bear his own burden. But it is not all the truth. God is forming in the world a society in which it shall hardly hold good at all, so pressed aside shall it be by the carrying out of the opposing precept, “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” In God—in the blessed unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—there is no loneliness; for there is no diversity of view, no separateness of interests, no difference of end and aim. To such a unity would the Lord Jesus Christ bring His Church. “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.” To this He is bringing us, as we yield ourselves to Him. And in no way can we co-operate better with Him, than by making His law the law also of our life, and bearing one another’s burdens.

Every truth in the Church has its embodiment and expression in some ordinance; and the ordinance for the bearing of others’ burdens in the pastorship. There has indeed been nothing like this, save in the Christian ministry. It is a thing without precedent among heathens, or even Jews. Their priests were sacrificers; rarely teachers; never pastors. The priests of Israel were indeed addressed as shepherds, but much as the Greek poet gives the name to kings, as the leaders, and guides of the people. Nothing was known, till Christ the Good Shepherd appeared, of the pastorship of individual souls. But when men, having His heart in them, were put in charge of His flock, the shepherding of souls began. Each one was felt to be so precious to God, that no labour could be too great to win it, and to keep it, and to fashion it for Him. That the labour should succeed required above all things that Christ’s love should be seen in His servants as in

Himself, in sympathy. "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities"—literally, cannot sympathize with them.. Now to sympathize is, not to *feel for*, as a superior being might do, but to *feel with*. It is to make the joys and sorrows of others one's own: really to weep with those that weep; really to rejoice with them that rejoice. If a pastor cannot do this, the name of his ministry will avail nothing. But if he can, he will bring Christ to every household and to every soul; and in that blessed Presence joys will be pure, and sorrows will become sanctified. He will not complain that his fellowship is more often sought for in trouble than in happiness. It is not that our troubles abound more; it is just because they are exceptions that they are so keenly felt, while our daily and hourly happiness passes by unheeded. But they are more felt, and they crave for sympathy; and if the pastor be at hand to bear the burden, and to minister the comfort, he will have done much to grasp the sorrowing soul with the grasp of Christ, and to hold it henceforth for good.

The "burdens," however, which the Apostle has especially in his mind are those of sin. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a *fault*, ye which are spiritual restore such an one . . . Bear ye one another's burdens." That the pastor may deal with such burdens, he must become also the confessor. Nowhere so fitly as over the confessional can "bear ye one another's burdens" be inscribed. Every priest who has received a confession, not perfunctorily, but with the heart of Jesus, can testify that no words describe so well his action in the matter. Absolution is indeed no mechanical process: it must come from the heart of the priest if it is to touch the heart of the penitent. And

so the Apostles charge us, that "any priest pronouncing absolution should do so fasting: remembering the words of the Lord, who condemned them that sat in the seat of judgment, for that they loaded men with heavy burdens, but touched them not themselves with one of their fingers; and the words of the Apostle, that we should restore them that are taken in a fault in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves also, and that we should bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

It is no part of our present purpose to dwell upon the subject of confession and absolution. But it is impossible to pass on without noticing how directly in the teeth of St. Paul's injunction is the attitude of popular Protestantism towards this subject. Enshrouding itself in a proud reserve, it declares that religion is a thing between the soul and its Maker; that it is not to man that sins are to be confessed; that the Pharisees were right after all when they murmured, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Is this the voice of a membership one of another? Is it a specimen of the much vaunted following of Scripture, which Scripture itself says "Confess your sins one to another" and "bear ye one another's burdens." No wonder that the stream of pastorship is dried up in Protestant communities, and the tender motherhood of the Church unknown.

But the burden-bearing of the pastor and confessor is not intended to exempt us from the duty, but rather to represent it to us. We are all called upon, in our place and measure, to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Probably no one would object to this statement, when the sorrows of his brother were the burden meant. It is not so obvious,

yet no whit less certain, when the burdens are his faults and sins.

Let us examine ourselves. What kind of thoughts and feelings arise within us, what words come most readily to our lips, when the failings of a brother or sister are brought vividly before us? Do we not at once begin to criticize, to blame,—perhaps to reproach or complain? And do we not do this without a thought that we are wrong in so acting, forgetting all about the example of Christ and His word as to who should cast the first stone, speaking as if we ourselves were exempt from the shortcomings we see so plainly in others? Is this the bearing of one another's burdens? But, say you, they are not felt as burdens. How do you know? Perhaps at the moment of your unfavouring comments, your brother is bitterly lamenting the fault in which he has been overtaken. He is weeping while you are criticizing: he is confessing what you are condemning. But even were it not so, is his sin to be no burden to you until it has become so to himself? Is this the law of Christ? Did He wait until man's conscience was alive to the load of its transgressions before He bare it in His own body on the tree? On the contrary, it is as we see our sins a burden to Him that they become a burden to ourselves. We are called upon to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His Body's sake which is the Church. How can we better do this, than by going before a brother in the conscience of sin, as He went before us all?

There are three ways in which we can bear one another's burdens,—in confession, in intercession, and in help.

What is the first thought of the heart that is right with God, when convinced of the committal of sin?

You will answer at once,—confession. “Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man And David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.” Now if we truly bear our brother’s burden, we shall no sooner become conscious of his fault, than we shall be sorry for it. If we see it only in him, our sorrow may become reproach: if we take it to another, it may sound like complaint; but if we bring it before God, and see its reflection in His face, it can only come as confession. God sees few sights more grateful to Him, than a father bowed down before Him for the sin of his child. Man never gains so much in humility, in charity, in unselfishness, as when he goes out of himself to feel another’s transgression, and returns to himself only to confess it as his own.

Then to confession succeeds *intercession*. We first acknowledge the offence, and then ask for forgiveness and grace for amendment. “He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Do we pray for one another? We shall never enlarge our hearts to the measure of Christ, and embrace in their fellowship His whole Body, unless we do so. Nor if we fail in this duty are we guiltless of the blood of the erring. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” While to perseverance therein a high promise is annexed. “If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Why is it that too often we meet sin with resentment and reproach, and not with confession and intercession? It is just because we are thinking of ourselves, rather

Wounds of our erring brother: we are expressing our wounded self-love or our scandalized propriety, instead of sorrowing with the foolish heart that is ruining its own peace with God and with itself. But be sure that we are not helping thus to save a soul from death. Resentment provokes resentment, reproach irritation, complaint self-justification. But let the offender see his sin reflected in us, in shame, in sorrow before God, in pleading for forgiveness; and he has no weapons wherewith to fight against this, no armour to defend himself against the appeal of such a love.

So, as we stand facing God-ward, let the sense of a brother's faults touch us at once to confession and intercession before Him. But as we also look man-ward, let us add to these, *help*. We can all help one another more than we think. Our Lord indicates one manner of so doing, which is hardly sufficiently followed. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Do not let a wrong or grievance rankle, estranging you from the offender, perhaps leading you to make complaint and sow dissension. "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, *thou hast gained thy brother.*" And those to whom age or position gives a right to advise,—let them use their privilege wisely and graciously indeed, but faithfully. Let the force of their observation of shortcomings not waste itself in criticism, but be transmuted into help. Ah! let us not stand aloof from one another. Remember that "Am I my brother's keeper?" was the word of his brother's murderer. As every one that hateth his brother is his murderer, so every one that loveth his brother will feel himself to be his keeper.

When thus we have realised the bearing of one

another's individual burdens, we shall be able to rise up into that which is our special calling, and bear the burdens of the Body of Christ. We pray God to knit us in unity first among ourselves, and then with His whole Church throughout the world. As the sense of unity grows, so does the burden-bearing increase. Not a wound, a bruise, a putrifying sore—in whatever part of the body it may be—but affects us as with a personal pang. “*Homo sum; nihil humanum a me alienum puto:*” nothing that happens in the Catholic Church is foreign or without interest to us. It is told of a late Archbishop of Canterbury, that on his being asked to join in a protest against the new dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he declined, saying that he made a point of never meddling with what was done in other parts of the Church. Such narrowing of sympathies is impossible to us who acknowledge a restored apostleship. Archbishops, Patriarchs, Popes may belong to a sect,—for they are but local authorities after all; but Apostles cannot. They represent the interests of the Church universal, and they lift us up to breathe its larger atmosphere. What a calling is this, that we should be in the midst of the Church what our Lord was among mankind: that its divisions, its contentions, its scandals should be felt by us as our own: that we should even be bearing the burden of whose load itself is unconscious,—the loss of its primitive endowments. It is a cross indeed; but who would not rather bear His cross than sit at the world's feast? Patriots are needed for the heavenly country, citizens to whom Zion is more dear than their own homes, who prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy. Such patriots, such citizens are Apostles; and such they would make us who acknowledge them.

In the Church, as with individuals, the work of burden-bearing is threefold: it takes form in confession, in intercession, in help. Daily in our confession "the sins of many generations lie sore upon us." In every Eucharist we offer, we intercede with the Lord for "His desolate heritage, His scattered and divided people." And from the pulpit and through the press we plead with our Mother that she would receive the help we have to bring: we show her what good things the Lord has done for us, and urge her to share in our blessings. Let us see that it is in this spirit always that we note the shortcomings of the Church. If the Lord should give us "arrows against Babylon," be sure they will not be those arrows which are bitter words. Let us not look upon our brother in the day that he has become a stranger, nor speak proudly in the day of his distress. If we are spiritual, let us do what in us lies to restore him in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves also: let us bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

This fulfilling of the law of Christ comes last to be considered. But it is too large and precious a subject to be dismissed in the few words that remain to be said. Ere long it will come before us as it was seen in Himself, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.* This only we now say,—behold in Him the confession, the intercession, the help which constitute burden-bearing: behold them in their original and at their highest. The confession is seen in the death of the Cross; the intercession at the right hand of God; the help through the ministration of the Spirit. If we

* See Good Friday.

would bear one another's burdens, be we conformed to His example. Take we up our cross daily, and follow Him in this world; drink we of His cup and be baptized with His baptism,—until the day come when there are no more burdens of sorrow, but only of service, and the reward shall come in the regeneration, in the kingdom of His glory.

“ Well I know thy burden,
O my servant true ·
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too.
But that ~~toil~~ shall make thee
One day all Mine own
And the end of sorrow
Shall be on My Throne.”

PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

Waiting for the Consolation of Israel.

Mal. iii. 1-5. Luke ii. 22-40.

THE Church of England, although she calls the feast we are now celebrating "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin," has never succeeded in banishing the common name in favour of the better one. The day is known as that of "The Purification," and attracts little or no interest accordingly. We may be thankful that it is given to us as "The Presentation in the Temple" simply,—that we keep it, not as one of the days of the blessed Mother, like the Annunciation, but—with the anniversaries of the Nativity and the Circumcision—as one of the days of her yet more blessed Son.

There are two aspects of the event we commemorate, in which we are called to participate in it. In the one we come in with the Child Jesus, to be presented in Him in His Father's house. Of this we speak to God in the collect for the feast. "We humbly beseech Thy Majesty, that as Thine Only-begotten Son was as on this day presented in the temple in substance of our flesh; so we may be presented unto Thee with pure and clean hearts by the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."* On this we dwell not at present; but

* Comp. Heb. x. 19-22; Rom. xii. 1, 2; Eph. v. 25-27.

turn to another view of the scene, in which we behold just Simeon and Anna the prophetess, waiting for and welcoming the Christ. The Church has always seen in these an emblem of her own calling to stand with loins girt about and with lamps burning, expecting the coming again of her Lord. The old name of the day—*Candlemas*—tells of the custom of bearing lights in the hand at the great Eucharist of the feast, to signify this attitude of the Church.

We bear no such material lights; but we do express the mind they embody. "Especially" we say in the prayer of Oblation "beseeching Thee of Thy goodness, that as Thou didst reward Thy holy servants Simeon and Anna, waiting for the consolation of Israel, by granting them to behold Thy Christ; so Thou wilt speedily answer the desires of Thy people, who now wait for the adoption, even the redemption of the body." If we stand in the place of Simeon and Anna, we may hope, in God's goodness, for Simeon and Anna's reward.

How, then, shall we follow their example? By this, most obviously, that we be as those who *wait*. It is not sufficient that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world": we must also be "*looking for* that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The Christian life is one not only of faithful service, but of continual expectation. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately."*

Like Simeon and Anna, we must be living in expectation, if like them we would be satisfied.

And then, how did they wait?

First, it was "for the consolation of Israel." It was not for some personal blessing, to come to them individually and apart; but for the fulfilment of the promise made to their people. This therefore should be the expectation of the members of the Body of Christ. To look forward to "a happy death" and "going to heaven" (as people speak) is but a private hope. So to depart and be with Christ may be far better for those who go, but it is of no advantage to those who remain. To "wait for the consolation" of the Israel of God, is to "look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body." We must go to Him, while His absence lasts, separately and alone: but when He returns, He comes to all.

Secondly, the place of their waiting was "in the temple." In the fellowship of their people they expected the Hope of Israel; but it was where their people worshipped that they looked upon His face. So it is in His Temple now that we hope to behold the Lord's Christ. Not necessarily in the material buildings wherein the Church's worship is offered; but certainly in that mind of which the building and its worship are the embodiment. If we know the Church only as "the Christian Society," we shall not be found in His Temple when the Lord whom we seek shall suddenly come to it. We must know it also as an holy priesthood, consecrated to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ. It is "the sons of Levi" whom He shall purify in the day of His coming, "that they may offer unto the Lord an

offering in righteousness": it is they who can say from the heart—"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple."

Thirdly, they waited in the power and inspiration of the Spirit of God. Anna was a prophetess. Of Simeon it is said that the Holy Ghost was upon him: it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ: and it was "by the Spirit" that he came into the temple, as the Child Jesus was brought in. If the Church at large has ceased to wait for her Lord, has lost her hope of being alive and remaining to His coming, is it not because she has suffered the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to die out of her? Let her cry for the spirit of prophecy; and she will find it "the testimony of Jesus,"* and a voice in her ever saying to Him, "Come!"

Stirred anew by this spirit let us wait, in the fellowship of the Church's hope, in the communion of her worship, until our eyes shall see God's salvation.

SUNDAY IN SEPTUAGESIMA.

Man made in God's Image.

Genesis i. 26-28; ii. 7.

THERE comes a time in the life of most of us, when we begin to ask—whence came I? what am I? whither am I going? I am recognising certain rules of conduct as obligatory on me. Whence comes the obligation? why ought I to do what I see to be right? I am doing little more than fulfilling the instincts of my nature. Has this life of mine any meaning in it? have I before me any worthy object in my work in the world?

It is well that we should at some time or other thus sound with plummet the depths of existence,—go down beyond the surface of opinion and custom, and see on what solid ground we stand. Wanting this, contenting ourselves with the results of education and association, believing only because parents believe, or thinking as society thinks, we have no root in ourselves. In time of temptation we shall be ready to fall away. The sands of established fashion may serve as a foundation while fair weather lasts. But let the storm come, and that house only will stand which is grounded on the rock of personal conviction, where the hearing of the sayings of truth has germinated and borne fruit in their doing.

Our God and Father has provided us with the

answer to such questions as these. At the beginning of the Scriptures which He has caused to be written for our learning stands an account of our origin. In a few words we are told what we are, and whence we came: what is our relation to the Maker of all, and to His other creatures: above all, what is that thought of His of which we are the expression and result. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion." "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul." Let us consider the force of these expressions.

Through five great periods the creative work had rolled. Upon the void and formless mass which then was Earth, light had been caused to shine. A firmament of air had expanded itself around the globe. Its waste of waters had been resolved into the due alternation of land and sea. From the ground so reclaimed vegetable life had sprung up in abundance. Then through the cleared atmosphere, sun, moon, and stars had shone, to mark the changes of time, and to bless with useful light. Last, upon the scene so prepared animal life had begun to appear, and air and water already had their proper inhabitants. And now the sixth and last day dawns; and the creatures of the land come forth and take their place. "God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind: and God saw that it was good." It is at this stage of the work that the word is heard, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

It is thus implied that hitherto nothing had appeared which was in the image and after the likeness of the Creator. Every thing indeed had been good after its

kind: and everything had witnessed to the power and wisdom which gave it birth. Life, whether in the plant or the animal, had manifested itself by the same phenomena, and moved in accordance with common laws. Form and structure had already attained a perfection which left little to be desired; and instinct was mimicking reason in its processes and anticipating its results. But neither life, nor form, nor instinct could reflect God. To bring forth a being so capable, something beyond these was necessary. Life there must be, and form, and instinct: but over and above such animal qualities at their highest must come the distinctive *human* element, if the requirement is to be fulfilled—"in our image, after our likeness."

To the same effect is the account of the actual making of man. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." There was nothing in the origin of his bodily part which differenced him from the creatures around him. "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field," as He formed man. By whatsoever process such formation took place—whatever is intended to be conveyed by the words, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," it may have been the same with him as with them. But now comes the special act, by which God created man as He had not created the brute, "in His own image." "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul." With all other living things the word had been, "Let the earth bring forth" "Let the waters bring forth." Life had sprung up as it were spontaneously at God's command. But the life of man is represented as a creation by itself, a special and direct inspiration from the Almighty. Man caught the breath of God, and so lived: no wonder

that he appeared in God's image. The other creatures were to the Creator as the works of our hands to us; but this was as a son.* Adam in his turn "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image;" and so—"in the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him."†

We are taught, then, that not in bodily structure, but in inner life, has man his peculiar origin and his distinctive destiny. Physically, he came as came the brutes. But he is man and not brute, because into his material frame God has breathed the spirit of life from Himself. And hence to be man is to be in the image of God, and after His likeness. Our bodies may betray kinship to the animals around us; but our souls may, if only they will, claim fellowship with the God above us. From Him they came, and to Him they will return. Even while here "in Him we live, and move, and have our being; for we are His offspring."

And does not the evidence of fact coincide with the account of Scripture? That it is an animal whom we call man appears very plainly. The eye of science finds no essential difference between the ~~bx~~man and the brute structure; and the moralist sees ever and anon with sadness the breaking out of propensities which proclaim the same identity. On the other hand, we are conscious of the presence of faculties in ourselves and our brothers of mankind which no lower creature manifests. And when we look abroad to see whence such faculties could have been derived to us, we find them in God. He is the Original, as well as the Originator in us, of thought and conscience and will—of every thing which makes us worthy of the

* Luke iii. 38.

† Gen. v. 1-3.

name of man. We can well believe that the soul in which such powers consist came from His inspiration, could not have come from anything lower than that. Mere life even He might have made, or caused to emerge; but soul must have been His gift by communication.

And so we can answer the questions—whence came I? whither am I going? I am an animal, whom God has lifted out of the herd by imparting to me His own sacred fire. Because of His breath within me I stand upright and face the skies, I think, I speak, I exercise dominion over all the other creatures, subduing them to my will. I am, as they are not, made in God's image, and intended to reflect Him. I am not fulfilling the law of my being if I live as a mere animal: I am only a true man as I am conformed to the likeness of God. Thus I came, and this I am: whither I am going the record tells me not. But it sanctions the persuasion I feel that when the common animal fate befalls me, and that which is dust in me as in them returns to the earth as it was, the spirit I have shall return unto God who gave it, and live for ever before Him. He it is who hath immortality: to be in His likeness is a promise of living eternal life with Him.

Again, we learn from the record of our origin what is "right," and why we are under obligation to do it. Right and wrong are qualities of action, as sweet and bitter, beautiful and ugly, are qualities of objects. But there is no "ought" about preferring sweetness to bitterness, or beauty to ugliness: it may be better taste, but it is not "duty." On the other hand, directly we perceive the quality we call "rightness" in an action, we feel that we owe it to some one, that it is somehow and somewhere *due*, that we should do it. This constraint,

this sense of moral obligation, is what we call "conscience." The perception of what is right may vary, as does that of what is beautiful; it may be imperfect, or even erroneous. But once let the impression of "right" be made, and man's instinctive response is "I ought,"—that is, I owe.

Now how is this? The obligation in question is often an extremely irksome one. Why cannot we throw it off, maintain that the idea of right is a delusion; that conscience is an artificial growth, the product of priest-craft and police; that the pleasant is the only good? We cannot, because we are made in the image of God. Because of this we are capable of perceiving rightness and wrongness ("Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil"); because of this we feel bound to choose the right and refuse the wrong. "It is impossible for God to lie" or to do any other evil: it is only possible for us as we suffer His likeness in us to be dimmed or defaced. The right is that which it is Godlike to do; and our duty to do it springs out of the very constitution of our nature, as made in God's image.

Yet again. We human beings are leading a rather unthinking life. From the cradle to the grave we are doing little more than satisfying the imperious instincts of our nature. Let each think over his life from one week's end to another, and with rare exceptions it will seem like the bird building its nest, or the bee constructing its cells. We are seeking for the food, warmth, activity, rest which our bodies require; we are supplying our intellectual cravings, the affections of our hearts, the aspirations of our spirits. There is very little conscious action in all this. We choose possibly our calling in life, probably our partner, perhaps (in

these days) our religious system. But having once chosen, we again let instinct and custom take the helm; or allow ourselves to drift with the tide. It would be intolerable were it not so. It would be as though to walk securely we had to know the action of every muscle concerned in the movement, and were perpetually on the watch to maintain our equilibrium.

Now if we were mere animals, such instinctive life could have but one end, and that is death and nothingness. The satisfying of appetite looks to nothing beyond: "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But since we are made in the image of God, divine things are as truly *natural* to us as those of a lower order. If we are fulfilling the desires of our whole being, we are seeking after that which is in God. There must be in us an unsaked thirst till we are living His life, rejoicing in the fullness of joy which is in His presence and the pleasures which are at His right hand for evermore. "I shall be satisfied" sings the Psalmist "with Thy likeness." Let us do that which lies to our hand to do: we may make it the very work of God. It needs not that we live this life as philosophers. The common ways of men, if only we tread them aright, will surely lead on to the heavenly country; for man is God's offspring, and begotten in His image, and his ways, if unperverted,—human relationships, human society, business, pleasure—are those which God prepared beforehand for him to walk in. Our life will be found at the last to have had its meaning, though we ourselves may never have stopped to enquire what that meaning was. It will have been the school of our education for the life of the kingdom of God.

Yet it is well that intelligence, and not instinct only,

should guide us; that there should be in our life not blind impulse merely, but the conscious adaptation of means to an end. Here once more the record of our origin comes to our help. Some of the Fathers have supposed that "*in the image*" and "*after the likeness*" express two distinct thoughts: that the one is the primary formation, and the other the ultimate object of attainment. We are made in God's image that we may come to His likeness. But however this may be, the primary formation must itself express the ultimate object. God could not have made us in any higher form than His own image; and the only rational object of our lives must be to fulfil the law of our being, and exhibit this image.

This is the foundation of that exhortation of the Apostle Paul—"Be followers" that is, imitators "of God."^{*} No lower example is propounded to us to follow than the Creator Himself. "Be ye holy, as I am holy:" "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"—these are other words expressive of the same fact. We have the capacity of knowing God, ~~inasmuch~~ as we are made in His likeness; for all knowledge grows out of community of nature and feeling. And to this capacity God addresses His revelation of Himself, which is threefold: in Nature, in inspired Word, in His incarnate Son.

1. That there is a revelation of God in nature is self-evident, as the workmanship cannot fail in some measure to exhibit the worker. But it is also declared in so many words by the Apostle.† "That which may be known of God is manifest in them," that is, among the heathen, "for God hath showed it unto them.

* Eph. v. 1.

† Rom. i.

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." This indeed nature exhibits; but it does not say much regarding the *character* of its Maker and Sustainer. They who know that character from other sources may see its features in the world around them: as Jesus speaks—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." But without such aid there is little to be seen in nature of the Father of spirits for whom we yearn. Power and wisdom are there for worship; but little of moral image for imitation.

2. God reveals Himself more clearly in His prophets; under which name we include all organs of His direct message to or dealings with mankind. Holy Scripture is the record of this revelation; and it proclaims the true name of the Lord as nature can never do. It tells how He has spoken, how He has wrought in the times of old; and gives the key to much of His dealing then and now with the children of men. It is a record greatly to be prized. But the revelation is after all an imperfect one. Its organs were but men of mortal frailty. Their earth-dimmed eyes could but see a glimpse here and a glimpse there of the Divine glory; and only what they saw could they speak. The greatest of them said of himself—"he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth;" and then, pointing to Another, "He that cometh from heaven is above all."

3. This last is He of whom it is said—"No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whom-

soever the Son will reveal Him." That man was made in the image of God and capable of His likeness was seen indeed, when God's own Son was made man. Had this not been the original type of humanity, the Incarnation would have been impossible: only in flesh where reason was and speech, where conscience constrained and adoration dwelt, could the Son of God be truly manifested. On the other hand, humanity being thus in its original, He had but to lift it to its highest to make it a real expression of His Divine life. The garment fits the Wearer; for it was made for Him in the beginning. Manhood in Him attains its utmost possibilities; but it is manhood still, and nothing else.

And now that capacity we have¹ of knowing God may be filled to the full: now we may seek to carry out the intent of our creation, and grow into God's likeness. For here is the very "image of the invisible God" for our pattern: here is God living the life of man that we may see how to live it. We were made God's offspring: shall we not seek to be conformed to the image of this His begotten Son, that He may be the First-born among many brethren? Surely thus it becomes us as we are men. The imitation of Christ is not a thing to be left to ecstasies and anchorites. It is for us who come eating and drinking as He came, for us carpenters and seamstresses and doctors and merchants, for us in every genuine development of human life. To be Christian is just to be truly human: to be spiritual is to rise above the animal: to "put on the new man" is to be "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."* Adam was the son of God; and however nearer the

* Col. iii. 10.

sonship of regeneration which we have in Christ our Lord, it bears the same name, and points to the same relation. We become sons of God not as we escape from our manhood, but as we fulfil it.

It has been the design of to-day's Reading to draw out the consequences of our original formation,—to show for what we are responsible by the mere fact of our being men and women. "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." It needs no argument to prove that we should be what we are; and it seems from what has been said, that if we would be truly manly we must be Godlike,* if we would be utterly human we must be Christian. Verily, then, this is life eternal, that we should know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. Without this, we are less than men. "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish."

No wonder, then, that to those who receive His Son, God has sent His Spirit, and formed them into His Church. No wonder that the ministers of His Church, having His Spirit, seek to lift up His children into the reality of their sonship, and to educate them for their high calling. For they do but say—"Be men indeed. Fail not of God's purpose in creating you after His likeness: let not His breath of life have been breathed into you in vain. Let Him multiply Himself in you to whom He has given dominion; that so the whole earth may become the blessed kingdom of God."

SUNDAY IN SEXAGESIMA.

St. Paul and his Apostleship.

2 Cor. xi.

Few things are more painful to a true man than to have to assert himself,—to recount his own services, to set forth his own deservings, to claim his own rights. He prefers to let his life speak for itself. When the Baptist sent his disciples to Christ, saying, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” what answer did the Lord give? He said, “Go and show John again *those things which ye do hear and see* . . . And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

There can be no doubt that in this as in all other things the Apostle Paul would have preferred to follow his Master’s example. If ever a true Christian gentleman walked this earth, it was he. But it was one of the miseries of his exceptional position, that to carry out his apostleship he had to be for ever proving and defending it. The root of the trouble lay in this, that he was not one of the first twelve. To receive Christ was to receive the Apostles whom He had sent; and so there was never any doubt of their authority. The sin of the Church in the first age was not the rejection of the apostolic ministry as such. But it was the unbelief in Jesus the Apostle at the right hand of

God, able and willing to send Apostles continually into the Church, as she had need. Peter and his fellows she knew; and she hoped to see them in the kingdom on the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But who was this man, claiming like mission and co-ordinate authority with them? How were they to know that the Lord had sent him? He spoke, indeed, of having "seen the Lord"; but it was in vision only, and the fact rested upon his own statement. And yet, having but this very doubtful claim on submission, he presumed to teach with authority, and after a manner very different from that of the genuine Apostles. Every year he seemed drifting farther and farther from the ancient landmarks. He was abandoning the sacred cause of Judaism, and throwing himself into the arms of the Gentiles. He must be resisted and counter-worked even if not actually silenced; for otherwise the Jew will cease to have any special inheritance in the Messiah, and will come in only on common ground with the heathen.

It was some such feeling as this which was continually dogging St. Paul's footsteps, and thwarting his endeavours. As soon as he left a church which he had planted, down came teachers from Judæa to mar his work. His apostleship was questioned, his teaching opposed, his doctrines of liberty misrepresented. It was this which was going on in the Corinthian Church when the Apostle wrote to it his second epistle. Hence that extraordinary appeal to them, a portion of which forms the epistle for this week. He is obliged to boast of himself; but he does it with a face burning with shame. Eight times he calls himself a fool in doing it. He is speaking, he says, not after the Lord, but foolishly. With impassioned but most mournful

irony he reminds them that they were suffering—that is, enduring—fools readily, even those who took advantage of them and treated them cavalierly. So they may bear with him for a little, while he asserts his claims. For he does it not for his own sake. He is but an ambassador; and his jealousy is for his Sovereign. He has espoused the Church to one Husband, that he may present her as a chaste virgin unto Christ. But he fears lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so her mind should be corrupted from simplicity towards Christ.

Is not the scene which we have depicted being re-enacted in this our day? Once again Apostles have come forth from Jesus the Apostle at the right hand of God. They come with Paul's credentials; and they meet with Paul's rejection. From all sides arises the disclaimer—we can have no more Apostles. Peter we know, and Paul we know; but the age of direct mission is past. You claim our obedience: but where is your authority? So men speak. From the height of their fancied wisdom they endure complacently "fools" without number, who lead them to substitute man's ways for God's ways. But Apostles, direct mission from Christ, the Church a real body, the kingdom at hand—never! It would derange all our plans; it would unsettle our whole life. We are content with the old position; with our "incomparable Liturgy," with our faithful Gospel-preaching.

So men speak. And over them the Apostles of the Lord yearn and pray, pleading their mission to bless, having upon them daily the care—the anxiety—of all the churches. Who is weak, and they are not weak? Who is offended, and they burn not? Let us at least see that their care be not in vain. Do not let the end

once more be—"All they in Asia have turned away from me"—"only Luke is with me." Paul had an Ephesus and a Thessalonica as well as a Galatia and a Corinth. Let the Apostles of the Lord now too have a hope and joy and crown of rejoicing, even us their work in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.

Christus Consolator.

Matt. xi. 27-30.

THIS very solemn and affecting scripture presents two divisions for our consideration. In its first verse the Lord Jesus speaks, in men's hearing indeed, but hardly to men, of His relation to the Father, of His Sonship and mediation. In those which remain, He directly addresses those present, in them inviting to Himself the world which He came to save.

I. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

We might almost think, as we listen to these words, that it is from the Gospel of St. John rather than from that of St. Matthew that they are taken. There is nothing like them elsewhere in the narrative of the first three Evangelists. But they do stand here; and, so standing, they witness to the unity of the testimony of the sacred biographers. St. John records a particular class of our Lord's sayings, which the other three pass over in silence. But here, jutting out as it were

in the midst of the common narrative, is a word of His identical in manner and purport with those which the beloved Apostle so often pictures Him as uttering. What conclusion can be drawn but that his Christ is the same as theirs,—no figure larger through the mist of distance and glorified with the halo of loving memory, but the true historical Jesus of Nazareth. He has painted one aspect of His life, they another; but the Person they depict is one and the same.

And now, what is the saying?

First, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." The words which follow show that He is not speaking of Himself as made man, but in His eternal being as very God. In this, all things are delivered unto Him of (that is, by and from, as giver and source) His Father. He is Son, and not Father: receiver, and not bestower. All things that the Father hath are His; but His, not of Himself, but of the Father, whose they are, and whose He is. This is the primal truth of the being of the Son of God, that He is Son, begotten of the Father, and in that eternal generation receiving all that the Father hath save the fatherhood itself, very God of very God.

"And then,—because God has so begotten Him, and communicated to Him all that is in Himself, "none knoweth the Son, but the Father." No creature can compass the mystery of the being of the eternally Begotten: He only, of whom is that being, can know it as it is. The figures given us for its apprehension—Son, Word, Effulgence, Impress—are precious, and to be contemplated with reverent study. But let no one think that they enable him to comprehend the mystery. After all is thought and said, it remains that we honour the Son even as we honour the Father, and unite Their

Divine names with that of the Spirit of Them both in one continual doxology.

And as none knoweth the Son, save the Father of whom He is, so "none knoweth the Father, save the Son" who is of Him. All that is in the Father is in Him: from all eternity He is in the bosom of the Father, and with Him, looking towards Him in infinite love and devotion. He must know the Father as none else can know Him. But He has brought His knowledge into humanity. that the brethren of whose flesh and blood He has taken part inight in their measure possess it also. "None knoweth the Father, save the Son, *and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.*" By the words He has spoken and the works He has wrought, He has revealed Him to all who have eyes to see. None need say to Him, "show us the Father"; for He has been so long time with us that we have had opportunity to see Him, and he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. But all have not eyes to see: the word is one of election—"to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him," literally, to whom the Son, if He so counsels and wills, shall reveal Him. And He does so counsel and will when any come unto Him, and take His yoke upon them, and learn of Him. For to these gives He power to become sons of God, as He is Son of God: and they look to the Father out of filial eyes, and sit at His table and speak with Him, and He appears to them as He did not while as servants only they stood by and waited, and in the strength of that vision they grow up in their sonship, till from babes in Christ they come to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of His fulness, and know even as they are known.

II. Such is the blessedness of those who respond to

His invitation: and now let us listen to the terms in which it is couched.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Let us consider for a moment what such words imply as to the person who utters them. In His previous saying He had plainly declared His Divine dignity: it shines out of the unique relationship to God, the entire and exclusive mediation towards men, which He claims. But such dignity is no less involved in the language He now uses. What mere man can stand up among his brethren, and say, "Come unto me"? The utmost any of us can do is that of Andrew for Peter—"Come with me, for I have found Him whom we seek." But this Man says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Surely this is He who by His prophet of old cried—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Surely this is Jehovah, God Almighty.

'And now, whom does He address?

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden"—that toil and are burdened. They are the two sides, active and passive, of the trouble that has come upon man since he lost paradise. We work with toil and strain, "wringing the hard gold from the sky;" we endure with the sense of a burden ever on our backs. Even though circumstances favour us, and we have ease without and within, yet sin is ever entering to make the wheels of life drag heavily, and convert existence itself into a load hard to be borne. In

addressing all who toil and are burdened, Jesus invites every child of man at some stage of his career. There are none to whom the appeal may not come home, none who can answer "It is not for me."

And what does the Lord hold out to these? That they shall be spared their toil, and relieved of their burden? Nay: but—"I will give you rest." Your labour may not be less, or your load lighter; but you shall no longer feel them irksome. Come unto me; and such peace shall flow into you that you shall sing at your work, and leap under the weight you have to bear. You shall find my yoke easy, and my burden light.

"My yoke," "my burden"—these words show how the change is produced, the rest is given. It is not by shrinking from the common toil, from the universal load. But it is by entering into Christ's service, and accepting them as from Him. "Take my yoke upon you" He says to those who come to Him: be my oxen, and plough for me. There is a liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free; but it is not a liberty to do as we please. His service is perfect freedom; but it is His service which we enter,—among them that are without law ~~being~~ as without law, yet not without law to God, but under law to Christ. "Take my yoke upon you." Its constraint is gentle, its burden is light—light as the stole which symbolizes it: but there it is. It will not gall or drag, unless we chafe under it: but it steadies and guides. With it continually round our neck we serve our one Master, even Christ; and yield our members as His instruments of righteousness unto holiness.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." Learn what? doctrine, interpretation, precept? Nay: not here. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in

heart." Learn of me to be meek, learn of me to be lowly of heart,—to toil without complaint, to bear burdens without impatience. So learn of me, "and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Not yet shall you be able to lie down in the repose which comes when the day's work is done; but the earnest of that rest you shall already have within. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, of me the meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For the yoke of my service is easy; the burden I give to bear is light.

• My readers—have you all, has each one of you, after this manner come to Jesus? Do not let the young think that this question is not for them. They may not yet have experienced the toil and burden of life. But it is not too early for them to take Christ's yoke upon them, to enter Christ's service while yet they have the dew of their youth. Perchance, if they do so, their yoke may never be other than easy, or their burden the reverse of light. But you who indeed know what it is to labour and be heavy laden—have you come to Christ, and is He giving you rest? Do you know what it is to lean upon His breast, and feel His everlasting arms around you? If in any these words arouse no echo, convey no recognized experience,—then let this Voice of Jesus reach them anew. He is saying from the right hand of God what He said in Galilee of old, "Come unto Me!" Can He say it to any soul of man without an eager response to His gracious invitation?

For those who have come to Him, and have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious, He has but one word to add—“Abide in Me!”

SUNDAY IN QUINQUAGESIMA.

The Most Excellent Gift of Charity.

1 Cor. xiii.

LET us meditate to-day upon the scripture which forms the epistle for this week. It is that sublime panegyric of love which St. Paul has indited when writing to the Corinthians.

There are few scriptural writers who differ so widely in regard of both the substance and the mode of their teaching, as St. Paul and St. John. The differing circumstances under which they wrote added much to natural character in constituting this contrast. St. Paul is the prominent figure of the Christian age in its stormy beginning. St. John takes his place when the tempest is lulling, and calm is reigning. St. Paul did his work as a master builder with the foe around him —like Nehemiah's men, “with one of his hands he wrought in the work, and with the other he held a weapon.” His writings swell with the emotion and heave with the turbulence of controversy. In St. John's time, the seductions of Gentile immorality no longer deceived, and the advocates of Jewish legalism had separated themselves from the Church. The Christian Temple rose up, like Solomon's of old, without stroke of axe or noise of hammer; and the workmen were at peace. At such a time came forth

the epistles of the beloved Apostle, calm and full of repose, affirming truth rather than disputing against error, and suffused in every part with the glowing light of love.

The grand object of St. Paul, accordingly, is to maintain against the Jew that the *title* to blessedness is not of the law, but of God's free grace and favour. St. John, on the other hand, presses ever on the Christian that the only capacity for blessedness lies in love. But in the midst of all apparent diversity between these two great Apostles, such a passage as this rises up to show how profound is their essential unity. Whatever be the importance of that faith for which St. Paul so earnestly contends, after all, he says, love is the greater. In the glorifying of love St. Paul and St. John are at one. Their very style of writing seems to assimilate. Of this chapter the late Dean Stanley has well written:—"On each side the tumult of argument and remonstrance still rages, but within it all is calm: the sentences move in almost rhythmical melody; the imagery unfolds itself in almost dramatic propriety; the language arranges itself with almost rhetorical accuracy. We can imagine how the Apostle's amanuensis must have paused to look up in his master's face at the sudden change of his style of dictation, and seen his countenance lighted up as it had been the face of an angel, as the sublime vision of Divine perfection passed before him."

Four points in connection with love are touched upon by the Apostle in this chapter.

1. The first three verses affirm that no spiritual gifts can avail their possessor or profit the Church without love. An application of them, as if they spoke of natural gifts and acquirements, has been usefully made

in all ages. But to us, who know something practically of tongues and prophecy, of the knowledge that sees mysteries and the faith that works miracles, they come especially home. Silver, they say to us, is the current coin of the kingdom of heaven. You are rejoicing, and rightly, in the gold and precious stones wherewith the Bridegroom is now decking His Bride. But see that the silver is as the stones in the street for abundance.

2. Ver. 4-7 exhibit love as the root and source of all holy feeling and righteous living. Philosophy, both in ancient and modern times, has puzzled itself as to the ground of moral action. One school places it in expediency. another in the dictates of conscience. Jesus Christ, and His Apostle after Him, supply a simple solution to the difficulty. Only love, they say, and all duty will follow. Love is wiser than expediency, more imperative than conscience. Love is the fulfilling of the law.

3. The next five verses contrast the abidingness of love with the transitoriness of spiritual gifts. Let it not be thought, however, that they countenance the error of those who say that these gifts were intended only for the first age of the Church, as a scaffolding to be taken down when the building was sufficiently advanced. Prophecies are indeed to fail, tongues to cease, knowledge to vanish away,—but when? "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Let the Church ask herself if her perfection has come upon her; and if not, where are her gifts which were to continue till then?

4. The last verse has been sometimes misunderstood. The Apostle does not say that faith will be lost in sight, and hope in fruition, but love will abide. All

three, he says, 'abide, when gifts vanish away; but the greatest of them is charity. The vision of God will ever be to the faith of the spirit and not to the sense of the body. Hope will then as now spring eternal in the human breast, as that which is beyond will always seem brighter than what has already been attained. But love is the greatest. Itself contains the other two; for it "believeth all things, hopeth all things." If we would pray for all good gifts in one, let us pray for love. When Solomon had his choice between wisdom, and riches, and length of life, and chose wisdom, he found the other two to follow; and he wrote of wisdom—"Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour."

The object of the Apostle in all this is to show the Corinthians that super-excellent way in which all spiritual gifts must be exercised. In chap. xii. he had laid out the truth of the One Body as the foundation of the action of its various memberships.* But the substance of that truth is love. The unity of the Body stands in love; and where love is, the greatest diversity of character causes no strife and no schism. No cement but this of love can bind together the stones of the temple of God.

And this love, which perfects humanity, has its source and counterpart in Deity. Christianity comes to us with the revelation of God as love in essence, and the example of Christ as love in action, and the shedding abroad of the Holy Spirit as love in communication. The gospel of this week sounds the first note in the Christian year of the greatest of all manifestations of love. "The Son of man shall be

delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted upon: and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again." Already we stand at the entrance of the Quadragesima, and down its vista see waiting before us the passion and the cross. It is well that our first thought of that cross should be tinged rather with the love it revealed than with the sorrow it inflicted. The suffering is past for ever; but the love which endured it abides eternally, pleading its merit at the throne of God. The same love constraineth us that, if He died for all, then we which live should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again.

Taking up the Cross.

Matt. xvi. 24-27.

LET us consider, first, the circumstances under which these words were spoken.

Jesus had begun to shew His disciples how that He must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the rulers of the Jews, and be slain, and on the third day be raised again. Peter, not taking in the last clause, struck only by the chilling force of those which had preceded, exclaims, "Forbid it, Lord: this be far from Thee!" Jesus turns upon the speaker, and addresses him as Satan, the adversary in His way. "Get thee out of my path; thou art my stumbling block: because thy thoughts are the thoughts of man and not of God." And then He sets forth the thought of God on the

matter,—the thought that was living and burning in His breast, that must be reproduced in all who would truly call Him Master and Lord.

And now an observation upon certain of the words used.

1. When Jesus says, "If any man *will* follow me" "Whosoever *will* save his life"—He is not merely speaking of following and saving in the future tense. The "will" is a word by itself:—if any man wishes, has a will, to follow me, to save his life. It is as in the Athanasian Creed: "Whosoever *will* be" is "Whosoever wishes to be saved."
2. The words "life" and "soul" appear quite distinct, and even contrasted. "Whosoever will save his *life* shall lose it: . . . for what shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his *own soul*." Yet in the original they are the same word; and, though doubtless employed with different shades of meaning, must not have their identity lost. The "soul" or "life" is the personal being, the individual existence, the *self*: that which is, and because it is enjoys or suffers. To seek to save the life is to preserve this self in its present existence: to lose the soul is to cease to live to all that is worth living for. Accordingly St. Luke reports our Lord's saying thus—"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose *himself*, or be cast away?" *

Let us now read the words of Christ as they literally stand.

"If any man wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever's will is to save his life, the same shall lose

it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it: for what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, and suffer loss* of his life; or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then shall he give to every one according to his work."

The teaching, then, is this. To deny ourselves is the way to being affirmed of God. If any one sets before himself as an object the preservation of his own life, he will find himself missing the very mark he aims at. He may continue to exist, but without anything which makes existence desirable: his better self will have withered, he will have lost the life he sought to save. And what shall compensate for the loss of one's self, of one's own soul and life? The whole world cannot do it. How then shall we be saved? Only by denying ourselves, by taking up the cross of sacrifice, by losing our life in His who died for us that henceforth we should not live to ourselves but to Him. He who thus loses his life shall find it. He will have denied himself; but Christ will affirm him when He comes in glory to judgment. He had forgotten his own interests, but God had remembered them. In thinking of this duty and that service, in feeling this need and that sin, in mourning with those who mourn and rejoicing with those who rejoice, he had almost lost the consciousness that there was such a person as himself. But when the thoughts of all hearts are discovered, such an one will find that he lives indeed,—that all this time there have been developing in him rich capacities of true enjoyment, whose time has come that they be filled.

There were other occasions on which our Lord taught His disciples a similiar lesson. We are told that at one time they came to Him, asking "Which shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" to which He replied, "He that would be great must become little. Humble yourselves as this little child; then shall you be great in the kingdom of heaven."* Again, to Peter saying "We have left all, and have followed Thee: what shall we have therefore?" the Lord replies by word and parable—"Beware of looking on your reward as wages: the very first may become last because of this."† To the like effect is His word—"He that exalteth himself shall be abased: but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It is not that exaltation is other than a good thing, nor also the receiving of reward and the saving of the soul. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God," writes St. Peter, "that He may exalt you in due time." But neither the one nor the other must be made the object of our striving, else it will melt in our grasp or change to its very opposite. To deny ourselves; to do good, hoping for nothing again; to humble ourselves, —this is our part. And out of this shall grow on God's part the saving of the soul, the full reward, the supreme exaltation.

It will have been observed that this principle has been applied as freely to the spiritual life as to the natural. It must be true in the one as in the other. Self-seeking, ambition, hireling service,—these evil things do not become good because transferred to the sphere of religion, and directed towards the future life. There is an "other-worldliness" which is just as dangerous and degrading as this-worldliness; and

* Matt. xviii. 1-4.

† Matt. xix. 27—xx. 16.

which is the special temptation of religious persons. The safeguard against it is the Lord's word—"Whoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

It is impossible not to see the application of this truth to a mode of preaching very current in our day. It is that which insists upon "personal religion" as the one thing necessary to be cultivated. Now there can be no question about the importance of personal religion. It is just what our Lord said—"What shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" But it is quite another thing to say that the way to attain to this personal religion is to think about it. The word just cited was a comment on that previous saying—"Whosoever will save his soul shall lose it" (remember that soul and life are the same). He who says,—the one thing before me is to keep my own soul alive, and be saved at the last, is doing the very thing most calculated to kill himself, and to obtain condemnation. For he is giving himself up to self-seeking, which is none the better for being baptized with a Christian name. He is narrowing his sympathies, and lowering his aims. He is growing less Christ-like, and therefore less God-like: and how shall the beatific vision greet his clouded eyes? He is serving for hire, and has no root in himself; so that the service would relax were the wages abated. The true way to personal religion is to forget oneself altogether; to look away from one's own inner being, and fix the eye on God and our neighbour. The preacher's exhortation, the disciple's aim, should not be "save yourself" but lose yourself." Lose yourself, indeed, that you may be found: but lose yourself. It is quite true that Christ when He comes will give rewards to His faithful

servants. But it is also true that those who have served Him for the sake of the reward are the least likely to be found faithful in that day. He that seeks reward shall lose it; but he that does good, seeking for nothing again, shall receive abundantly. The genuine utterance of the Christian heart is that of Xavier—

“O God, we love Thee: not because
We hope for heaven thereby.

* * * * *

Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward,
But as Thyself hast loved us,
O ever loving Lord.”

Who better illustrates “personal religion” than the Apostle Paul,—he who said, “I suffer the loss of all things and count them as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him”? Yet listen to him as he yearns over his people—“I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren’s sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” His language is indeed hypothetical—“I could have wished,” were such a thing possible. If to be blessed with Christ, he seems to say, were a mere mechanical advantage,—were it anything separable from the life towards God which is in and through Him, I would gladly renounce it if they might gain through my loss. It recalls Moses’ saying—“and now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin:—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.”

And so we reach this result, that personal religion, personal salvation, are best attained the less we think about them,—that they truly come to us as we live the life of the Body of Christ. The individual members flourish just in proportion as they are members one of

another. It is so in the body natural. If our separate parts had consciousness, and were wise, they would do as we ourselves do, viz., cultivate the health of the whole. To care for themselves separately,—to try to thrive in isolation, regardless of the well or ill-being of the other, and especially of the neighbouring parts, would be vain, would be suicidal. • Indeed, if we ourselves begin to fix our attention upon any one organ of our body, that organ is apt to become deranged and even diseased. There is something very like this in the spiritual. That religious life which is constantly regarding itself, which is ever feeling its own pulse and testing its muscles of activity, is rarely a healthy one. We are told, often with unfriendly intent, that strong religious feeling is a potent cause of insanity. ~~This~~ is so : but it is not that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, which visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeps the heart unspotted from the world. It is but self-feeling and self-seeking carried into the spiritual region ; and there as elsewhere these are morbid and injurious.

It is not, therefore, in disregard of personal religion, but for its truest promotion, that the one word of the apostles to us in these days is—not “save your souls” but—“know the Body of Christ.” In that blessed fellowship, in care one for another, in confession of the common sin and prayer for the common good,—above all, in mutual help and ministration, lies the true life of man in Christ. It is a self-forgetting life, a giving up ourselves for His Body’s sake which is the Church. It does not occupy itself in curious questionings about future safety. • It thanks God that He has saved, is saving, will save those who love Him from sin and death : it laments that its love is so feeble, but

for that very lamentation knows that it exists. Its question is not—what shall I do to be saved? but—what can I, who am saved, do to show my love? Give me daily services of worship, in which I can pour out my soul in honour and adoration to Him who has loved me: give me opportunities of ministration to His suffering ones, that I may give forth to others the love He has shed abroad in my heart. To such an one the thought that he is worshipping and serving that he may escape some punishment, or receive some reward, but excites a repugnant chill. Nay, he says, it is the love of Christ that constraineth us, who died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself; and take up his cross, and follow me." This is what the Cross meant, before it was erected on Calvary; this is what it means now—self-denial, the losing one's own life, the humbling oneself. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." But the self-denial in Him was no mere painful mortification; nor need it be so with us. "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame." In the same joy He gives us to live, if we know Him aright,—in it to count pain and loss for Him a very small thing, in it to pass through the fires without a singe upon our raiment. The secret of the Christian life is the kindling of this joy in the heart. If it is not there, God's service will be but painful and weary, even though it be done. But in its sustaining force, in its overcoming impulse, the yoke becomes easy and the burden light: self-denial hardly

needs an effort, for we love others better than ourselves. The martyrs went singing to the fiery death, not because of their own gain thereby, but to honour their Lord and to encourage their brethren. And in like manner it is in joy that we should lose our lives for Him and for them,—lose them in the daily life of sacrifice and self-forgetting service.

The Christian life is no mere following of an example, though it has an Example: it is a bringing forth the fruit of a Spirit. It is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son who is in us: of the Father who spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all,—of the Son who counted not His very equality with God a thing to be grasped at, but emptied Himself. No one truly inspired by such a Spirit can allow self—either the natural or the spiritual self—to be paramount in his thoughts and aims. He must find his true life, if it be the life of God, in living for others. Let this Spirit have free course in us, if we would serve God aright. Let Him bring forth love in us, and joy, and peace; longsuffering, and gentleness, and goodness; faith, meekness, and temperance. All these belong not to the individual but to the common life—to the life that looks to God above, and to the brethren around, and has no gaze to spare for within. If the fruits ripen, it is well with the tree that bears them: though it be pruned, it is that it may bear more fruit. Upon this work it has expended all its energies: but lo! itself withers not, but flourishes for ever as an approved branch of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The sum of what has now been said is this. God desires wholly to save, richly to reward, highly to

exalt all who are conformed to the image of His Son. We, co-operating with Him, are to work out this our salvation with fear and trembling. But we do it not by exalting ourselves, by looking for reward, by wishing to save our life. On the contrary, we are called to self-humbling, to spontaneous unbought service, to denial of our own interests whether temporal or spiritual. Our opportunity for ~~one~~ and ~~all~~ is this, that we are not called separately, but in one Body.* In the fellowship of that Body, in devotion to Him who is its Head, let us lose ourselves: and God will find us. By no painful efforts of ours, but by the love of Christ constraining us and the Spirit of Christ inspiring us would God bring us to His glory. Let us trust ourselves unreservedly to God; and He will ordain peace for us, for He will also work all our works in us. We shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. the mountains and the hills shall break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

FIRST SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

The Temptation of our Lord.

It was after His baptism, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, that He, who was in all things tempted as His people are, suffered that great assault of the enemy of God and man which is recorded in the gospel of this day. The voice from heaven declaring Him the beloved Son of God, the unmeasured pouring out upon Him of the Spirit of God His Father, were immediately followed by a conflict commensurate with His new might. The good fight of faith grows fiercer not easier with growth in grace, and every new gift of God is a weapon that will of a surety be called into use.

Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was led of the Spirit, but He was not tempted of the Spirit; He was tempted of the devil. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. Temptation is of the devil. But also every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed, and lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin. Jesus was tempted of the devil and sinned not because the answer to the temptation was the answer, not of lust, but of the Holy Spirit of God within Him. He used faithfully the power of God bestowed upon Him, and became more than conqueror thereby.

Jesus was tempted of the devil, not of God. Yet He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be so tempted. The well-beloved Son of the Father was led by the Spirit of the Father to be tempted of the devil. He who taught His people to pray, Lead us not into temptation, was Himself led into temptation by the Spirit of Him who hears and answers all true prayers. But indeed for this end came He into the world. The adversary whom He came to overthrow could not be overthrown unless He were engaged. As the captain of our salvation Jesus was led of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, that being so tempted and victorious He might begin to work our redemption for us. We, whose salvation has been accomplished for us, and who wait but for full deliverance by the hand of Him who has thus far wrought for us, may well pray "lead us not into temptation" while yet we wait. It is as we so pray, living while we pray lives of faithful effort, that He can keep us from being tempted above that which we are able to bear. When we cease so to pray we fall. But, the tempter and the temptation existing, He must needs be led into it, that, conquering, He might accomplish salvation for us, and be for ever our strength in every temptation which God's love suffers to fall upon us.

It was the beloved Son of God, in whom the Father was well pleased, who endured the temptation of Satan. As we contemplate the fact, the reality of the Incarnation grows upon us. That the Son of God should be tempted of the devil is a thing impossible indeed, save He had most truly and completely taken upon Himself our nature and become very man. Son of God the voice from heaven declared Him; Son of man the temptation in the wilderness proved Him; and our

faith and hope rest in the double fact. Either fact lost sight of, the other becomes meaningless for all the purposes for which we believe in Him.

The first of the temptations recorded for our instruction in the gospel of the day is set forth in the words "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, if Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." If Thou believest, or if Thou desirest others to believe, that words from heaven declared Thee the beloved Son of God; if Thou believest, or if Thou desirest others to believe, the reality of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Thee, then stand up in Thy true nature and take up the power that has been given Thee, and, being hungry as Thou art, command that these stones be made bread. The temptation to take up the challenge and work the miracle that was demanded of Him; the temptation to shrink before the greatness of that which He was, if this nature and this power were truly His—both these were real temptations to Him who was as truly Son of man as Son of God. But the very manhood which made the temptation possible, supplied also the ground of the answer to it. He could suffer from hunger, not because He was the Son of God, but because He was the Son of man. As Son of man suffering the common needs of the humanity into which He had entered, it was His duty to use the ordinary means of humanity to supply those needs. Work and prayer are the means by which men must gain their daily bread. Those powers of the Holy Ghost which were upon Him were for others' use, not for His; to work out God's salvation for man, not to render common human life easy for Him who bore it. He, bearing our burden, was, so burdened, to wield the might of God for our redemption. To have used it to

lighten the weight that He had undertaken to carry would have been to give up the work upon which He had entered. The temptation of Satan struck at the root of all His fidelity and of all our hopes. But the answer came:—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The declared will of God, not the ~~need~~ of bread, was the law of His life at this, as at all times. He came to do the Father's will as Son of man not less than as Son of God. Working out the will of God *for* man He did mighty wonders by the power of the Holy Ghost. Bearing the will of God *as* man He suffered hunger and all pain till God in His providence should feed and relieve Him. So in obedience of sonship He beat off the temptation of the devil.

In the same loyalty to the divine purpose in ~~the~~ gift of the Holy Ghost, He resisted the temptation to presumption, and would, no more than the humblest of His brethren should, call upon God to protect by supernatural means that life and safety which by natural means He was bound, as Son of man, to guard. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" beat back the deceitful use of "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee." Nor would He by any evil means attempt to anticipate the kingdom to which He was born, but, waiting God's time and means to make His purpose good, kept His heart fixed upon the watchword of all holy living, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Our Lord and Master, who is also our Elder Brother, "received not the grace of God in vain." In His house, upon this His holy day, we offer our Eucharist for His conflict and His triumph. But also our lives should be a constant Eucharist, and our true thanksgiving is

that we receive not the grace of God in vain. To us also the Holy Ghost has been given. To us the temptation is ever present to disbelieve the fact, or to prize it as for our own use and gain ; to reject it, or to presume upon it ; to grow careless of God's great ends, or to take evil methods to realize those ends. But let us be strong in God and in the power of His might. Let us believe in our high calling in Christ Jesus, but let us learn also that this calling is no less to bear than to do the will of God. Let us seek to be filled with a meek and godly fear, which shall render presumption impossible. And let us believe in God, waiting for the fulfilment of His purposes, and learning more and more deeply to realize that every time we bow down before evil, we are fighting against the kingdom of God. So shall we grow up into our sonship of God, and witness for Him by the power of the Holy Ghost.

SECOND SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

The Transfiguration.

2 Peter i. 16-21. Matt. xvii. 1-9.

IT seems appropriate that our Lord's transfiguration, as His temptation, should be specially brought before us on some one day in the year. In the Latin Church this is done on the sixth of August, when the epistle and gospel are those which in our Prayer Book are appointed for to-day. But the Roman gospel for this second Sunday in Quadragesima also tells the story of the transfiguration; and the Apostles have here followed the ancient Western use, instead of (as commonly) the Anglican variations of it. By giving us, moreover, the epistle which contains St. Peter's reference to the event, and—later—by providing special hymns for the day, they have plainly shown their mind that the transfiguration of our Lord should be the occurrence of to-day's commemoration, the topic of to-day's meditation.

Let, then, the circumstances of this wondrous event rise before our minds. It is night. Jesus goes up to a mountain, as is His wont, to pray. Craving for companionship and sympathy, He takes with Him Peter and James and John; but, as on a later and sadder occasion, finds that human help fails Him, and that His burden must be borne alone. Suddenly their eyelids, heavy

with sleep, are raised, and they behold a vision of exceeding glory. Their Lord's face is bright as the sun: His raiment is white and glistering. Beside Him, also in glory, stand Moses and Elias,—the giver of the Law,—the greatest of the prophets. These speak with Him of His decease, which He is to accomplish at Jerusalem. Sore amazed, and knowing not what to say; feeling only that it was good to be there, they propose to make three tabernacles in which these glorious ones may abide and be honoured. Then came down upon them the bright cloud of the Divine Presence, such as Ezekiel saw by the river Chebar. It overshadowed and enveloped them all; and out of its excellent glory came forth a voice which said, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him!" When they heard that Voice—which who can hear, and live?—they fell on their faces in awe. Their Master's touch aroused them; and when they looked up, lo! the glory had faded, and the bright cloud departed, and in the moonlight stood Jesus alone. Where were Moses and Elias, for whom they would have made tabernacles? Nay! the law and the prophets were until Christ; but now their work was done. The answer to Peter's proposal was—"This is My beloved Son: hear *Him*!"

The transfiguration strikes for us a well-known note of hope. It exhibits—as St. Peter says—the *power and coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ; "it fulfils His own word to His disciples six days before—"Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man *coming in His kingdom.*" And the glory it shows is one which shall be revealed also in us, when He shall appear and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. As we sing in the hymn—

"With shining face and bright array
 Christ deigns to manifest to-day
 What glory shall be theirs above,
 Who joy in God with perfect love."

But it also reads us a lesson as to how we are to attain to this glory.

St. John wrote—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (*and we beheld His glory*, the *glory as of the only begotten of the Father*), full of grace and truth." He was one of the witnesses of the transfiguration; yet it was not of this only that he spoke. Of the turning of water into wine he wrote—"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, *and manifested forth His glory.*" And if in this miracle, then in all miracles: and if in miracles, then also in their measure in all His works, in all His words, in every tone and gesture. The light did not come from without; by fitful gleams and flashes. It was an ever burning fire within, suffusing with Divine radiance every outgoing of His spirit. No wonder that once at least in His life it so flamed up as to penetrate the veil of its earthly tabernacle, and invest it for a moment with the splendour of the house from heaven.

It is this glory which is to be revealed in us. It must be in us now, if it is to be revealed hereafter: the lamps must be burning in the pitchers, if the breaking of the pitchers is to manifest the light. Not to all indeed may be given the wonder-working hand, or the word of prophetic illumining. But the essence of the glory of the only begotten of the Father, is this, that it is full of grace and truth. To us who have received Him has He given power to become sons of God. Of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace. It is this "Christ in us" which is "the hope of glory,"—the hope, because the first-fruits

and earnest of it. There are supreme moments, when those who company with the saints of God have testified that their very faces have been as the face of angels. But in all that we say or do the Christ in us should manifest itself, in every word and work there should be some shining out of the sonship of the heavenly Father.* And then there shall be for us another mount of transfiguration; where those that stand with the Lamb shall be changed into His image, from glory unto glory, and shall hear the Voice which saith—These too are My beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased.

Standing with the Lamb on the Mount Sion.

Rev. xiv. 1

THE 144,000 sealed ones, when gathered as the first-fruits of the earth's harvest, are seen standing with the Lamb *on the mount Sion*. What does this mean?

It seems to point us back to one of the most significant periods in Jewish history, viz.: the reigns of David and Solomon, as throwing light upon the present scene. Let us recall the story.

When Jordan had been crossed, and Israel had entered into the land of promise, the tabernacle, which had accompanied them in their wanderings through the wilderness, was left at Shiloh in mount Ephraim, where Eli and the other high priests ministered before the Lord in it. But it came to pass that the ark, the very central thing in the tabernacle, the actual abode

of the glory of God, was taken out to go* to battle with the hosts of Israel against the Philistines, and was captured by them. As it is written in Ps. lxxviii--" He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men: and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand." Then came the plagues with which the Philistines were smitten because of the presence of the ark among them; and its consequent restoration by them to the children of Israel. It was brought to Kirjath-jearim, where it remained for twenty years.

These events may or may not have their typical meaning. But those which follow have an unmistakeable significance. David, the man of war, as the crown of his conquests takes the stronghold and citadel of Zion, which was in the midst of Jerusalem. There he establishes his palace and his throne. And his next act is to bring up the ark of the Lord to be with him on the hill of Zion. Here it remained within curtains during the remainder of his reign, and was during this time the centre of the religious life and worship of Israel, as we see from the Psalms. It was out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, that God shined: it was in Zion that every one appeared before God. But David, throughout his warlike reign, is collecting materials for that temple which his blood-stained hands may not build. Solomon his son, in whose days is abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth, comes and builds the temple—not on mount Zion, but on mount Moriah. And then the ark is taken from between its curtains and placed in the holy of holies in that temple, while they sing—" Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the ark of Thy strength."

It is evident, then, that the time during which the ark rested on mount Zion is a period of transition. The tabernacle is the type of the Church in mortal flesh, journeying through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly inheritance. The temple sets forth the same Church in permanence and glory. But between the two there is an intermediate stage. The tabernacle still exists: Solomon himself honours it at the outset of his reign by going to offer sacrifice there. But the ark has been removed from it, and has a separate existence: while the tabernacle remains on the common earth, it is exalted to where God has set His king upon his holy hill of Zion. What can this signify but the separation of a portion of the Church from the main body, and its standing before the Son of man in His own place? But this is only a temporary arrangement. The time comes when the ark must merge its distinct character, and become once more only a part (though a special and prominent part) of the house of God. But it is not the tabernacle, the Church in mortality and change, to which it returns, but the temple, the steadfast, permanent, glorified house which is the Lord's rest for ever.

Now this is just the mystery of the 144,000, who have the Father's name written in their foreheads. They are "redeemed from among men, a first-fruits unto God and the Lamb."* They rest not upon the common earth, but stand with their Lord—who at this time is still David, the man of war—in His own place. They shall be with Him a centre to which all shall look, and from whence shall go forth all testimony and all help to those who are around the base of the

* See Fifth Sunday after Easter.

mount. But their separation from their brethren is only temporary: the harvest must follow the first-fruits into the garner of God. During the very period in which our David is subduing His enemies, He is preparing the materials for His future temple. And when the reign of the Prince of peace shall come, and the temple be finished, then shall the ark take up its place in the holiest thereof, and the Body of Christ once more be seen as one.

If the sealed would constitute this ark—as they are called to do—let them remember that which is written in the ancient story:—“there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.” Let there be nothing in us but the law of love to God and man, written on the fleshy tables of our hearts by the Spirit of the living God.

THIRD SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

• **Cleansing and Filling.**

Eph. v. 1-14. Luke xi. 14-28.

THE epistle of to-day sets forth to us the standing and responsibilities of our baptism. We are God's dear children; and it is ours to be followers—that is, imitators—of our Father; walking in His steps who is the Son of His love. We, who were sometime darkness, are now light in the Lord; and have to walk as children of light, and to bring forth the fruit of the light. Those unfruitful works which grow in darkness we have renounced for ever. With uncleanness of word or deed, and with covetousness, we have no fellowship. Standing in the daylight, we cannot—if we would—share the wanton revellings of the night. We have awakened from sleep and arisen from the dead, and Christ has given us light.

So through the epistle speaks our baptism to us. But then the gospel takes up the tale: and, beginning with what we are by baptism, goes on to speak of the need of that presence and power of the Holy Ghost, which is signified by our confirmation through Apostles' hands.

We once adorned the palace of the Adversary. A strong one, and armed, he kept his goods in peace. But there came upon him One stronger than he, and overcame him, and divided his spoils. The souls of

men were set free from the presence and power of the enemy, and became His who had delivered them.

Into all this we enter by baptism. Our service shows it forth. First we have the exorcism, then the christening. The evil spirit is cast out: and then comes the joining to Christ, and the baptismal vow, and the supply of grace, and the growing into an holy temple in the Lord for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

But "when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he cometh, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished."* This is the danger of those who are content with baptismal cleansing; and go not forward to the sealing and anointing. It is not sufficient that the unclean spirit be cast out. The Holy Spirit must come, and take up His habitation in the vacant house. Only thus can it be secured against re-invasion by its former tenant. He may return: but he will see the lighted window and the smoking hearth; he will hear the hum of work and the song of praise; and he will attempt no entrance, for he knows that the Stronger than he is there.

The practical lesson for us all is that we welcome and cherish this heavenly Guest. Be sure that nothing but the life and energy He brings can make us secure against our enemy. He that is not with the Lord is against Him; and he that gathereth not with Him scattereth. It is not enough that we keep clear of gross vices, that we sweep our souls from the dust of outer defilement, and garnish them with sound doctrine

* Matt. xii. 44; Luke xi. 35.

and good works. All this did the Pharisees, against whom in the first instance our Lord directed His parable. We have only to look on to the Crucifixion and to the fall of Jerusalem, to see the entering in of the seven other spirits, and the last end worse than the first. Let us seek to the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us, that He will fill the hearts of His faithful people, and kindle within them the fire of His love. Let us not be content till our hearts are all aglow with that fire. Let us believe, not with the cold assent of indifference, but with the living trust of the child of God's family. Let our love be something more than the absence of enmity, and burn with the warmth and the passion of true*devotion. And let our hope be the breathless thrilling expectation which has already an earnest of the joy to come, and the ardent longing of the Bride which can almost draw down the Bridegroom from the skies.

Into hearts thus filled and thus fired no evil power can enter. The place is pre-occupied ; the dwelling consecrate. So fill us, Lord, and so fire us, for Thy holy Name's sake ! Amen.

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE evening portions of scripture at this period of the year are taken from the Epistle to the Hebrews. It may be profitable to sum up what is known regarding this epistle generally,—the persons to whom it was written, the object of its composition, the course of its argument, and, lastly, its authorship.

* I am indebted for the suggestion of a good deal of the following to Dr. Thiersch, in his *De Epistola ad Hebreos Commentatio Historica*, and in his *History of the Christian Church*.

The epistle was addressed to the Hebrew Christians in Palestine and Jerusalem. The position of these Christians was a very peculiar and difficult one. Like all the Jewish converts, they had to reconcile the claims of two dispensations, both equally divine, each recognising the other, and yet the two becoming day by day more divergent and (apparently) antagonistic. At first, no such difficulty had presented itself. When Jesus was preached as the Christ of whom all the Prophets had spoken,—as the Saviour and King of Israel, those who believed in Him could only see their ancient dispensation finding herein its culmination and perfection. He who came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them : He who was Himself in all things a faithful Jew, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Law blameless :—on Him a Jew could believe without the necessity of moving one step from the place where the God of his fathers had set him. So far, all was clear. But difficulties soon began to arise. First came the preaching of Jesus as the Christ to the Gentiles, and their admission into the Christian covenant without any previous induction to Judaism. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul are full of the troubles, the controversies, the jealousies, to which this development gave rise. To recognise the baptism of Cornelius was not so much : it was merely to admit that one who was already a Jewish proselyte might share in the blessing vouchsafed to Israel in the Messiah. But if Gentiles of all kinds were to be received to baptism, quite irrespective of the rites and ordinances of the Law, it seemed that Israel's distinctive position as the covenant people of God was gone. Christ was no more to them than to all other nations ; their only privilege

being that which St. Paul notes—"to the Jew *first*, and also to the Greek," and which St. Peter early declared when he said, after citing the promise to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"—"Unto you *first* God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.*

Hard as we know this to have been to the Jewish converts generally, it must have been still harder for the Hebrew Christians who formed the church in Jerusalem. Dwelling in the holy city, in constant attendance upon the services of the temple, † bound by many ties to the priests, the scribes, the teachers of the ancient faith, they could hardly have realised their new standing in its distinctiveness. They must have felt more as a peculiar synagogue,--like that "synagogue of the Libertines" of which we read in Acts vi., ‡ having views and practices of their own, but regarding the temple as their true and only centre. It was from Judæa that those emissaries came who taught the Gentile converts, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."§ And although the Council of Jerusalem settled this question in the new and true direction, we can hardly think that all uneasy feeling was removed thereby from the minds of the Hebrew Christians. But now came a sorer trial, peculiar to this portion of the Church. For a long time the Jewish authorities had tolerated the new sect (as it seemed) which had risen up in the bosom of Judaism. After the few attempts at persecution recorded in the earlier chapters of the Acts, angry feeling seems to have subsided; and St. James and his

* Acts iii. 26. † Ibid. ii. 46; iii. 1, &c. ‡ ver. 9. § Ibid. xv. 1.

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church appear every now and then in quietness and peace at Jerusalem. But this calm was not to last. The visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem, and the passions roused by his conduct, gave rise to another flood of persecution. From the histories of Josephus and Hegesippus we learn of the martyrdom of St. James, the brother of the Lord, the chief pastor of the church in Jerusalem; and of the issuing by the Sanhedrim of the greater excommunication against all who confessed Jesus as the Christ. Whatever may have been the forms of persecution under which the Church then suffered, this must have been the keenest of all. On the one hand they saw Him whom their teachers proclaimed as the Christ rejected by His own people, and finding a church among the Gentiles. On the other hand they perceived that if they themselves were to continue to acknowledge Him, they too must be content to become no better than Gentiles:—to have no share in the holy sacrifices, to lose the blessing of the Aaronic priesthood, to be forbidden the habitation of God's house, the place where His honour had dwelt. Persecution is always a temptation to apostasy; but this form of trial appealed to something more than love of ease and the dread of suffering. It could not but raise the doubt,—can this be the Christ, whom his own people reject?—and again—What is the exchange we are making? On the one side there stands God's own people—His election out of all the families of the earth—to whom pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the worship of God, and the promises, and the oracles of truth. On the other side is one poor man, despised and rejected, followed by a few despised and rejected disciples, and obliged to seek a body among the accursed

heathen. For what are we giving up all that God has ordained in the past, and which He has never in like manner abrogated?

It is to this people, and at this time, that the Epistle to the Hebrews appears to have been written. And we cannot conceive of anything better calculated to strengthen their faith, to guard them against apostasy, and to comfort them under their afflictions, than the arguments and exhortations herein contained. The most cursory view will show us that the first ten chapters—the strictly doctrinal portion—have for their one argument the superiority of the Christ to anything which the former dispensation could furnish. In ch. i., ii. He is shown to be better than the angels, by whose ministration the law was given. Then we are bidden to consider Jesus as Apostle and High Priest of our profession; and in ch. iii., iv. He is shown to be greater than Moses the apostle of Israel; in ch. v.-x. to be in His Priesthood superior to Aaron and his succession. The argument is conducted almost entirely by citation from the scriptures of the Old Testament, which would obviously be the best course when dealing with Hebrews. And two inferences are ever and anon suggested as following from the superiority of the Christ. First:—if He be greater than angels, than Moses, than Aaron, the new dispensation which He inaugurates—its law, its ministry, its worship, its grace, its hope—must be far superior to anything enjoyed under the Old Covenant. Second:—if Christ be so great, and His grace so precious, how fearful the sin of apostasy from Him. “If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

"Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." "He that despised Moses' law died under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorrier punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?" Lastly.—"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh! For if they escaped not, who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven" (ch. ii., iv., vi., x., xii.).

While this is the argument of the doctrinal portion of the epistle, its concluding and more hortatory chapters bear witness to the same condition of those to whom they were written. Consider such passages as these—"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is," "cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward," "the just shall live by faith, but if he draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." There can be little doubt that the persons thus addressed were in much danger of apostasy. Again, the opening verses of ch. xii. plainly reveal a state of persecution—"Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. . . . My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him" (ver. 3—11). And

from ch. xiii. 13, 14 we see that one form which this persecution took was excommunication. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him *without the camp*, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city; but we seek one to come."

Having thus ascertained the persons to whom the epistle was addressed and the object of its composition, we have last to enquire into its authorship. It is by no means so certain as is commonly assumed that it was written by St. Paul. From the earliest dawn of Christian literature down to the end of the second century, we find considerable difference as to its authorship. Some few ascribe it to St. Paul himself; many more, recognising it as embodying his teaching, refer its actual composition to one of his companions, as Luke, Silas, Clement, or Apollos.* One—Tertullian—speaks as if the African Church at least believed it to be the independent composition of the Apostle Barnabas. But the resemblance of the teaching of the epistle to that of St. Paul was so strong, that the practice of citing it as his gradually spread over both Eastern and Western Churches, and our popular Bibles embody the view to this day. I believe that the general adoption of this tradition has been attended with great advantage. For, even though the scholars of the present day are almost unanimous in their opinion that the internal evidence is against the supposition that St. Paul was the actual author, still I think there can be little doubt that the writer, whoever he was, was deeply imbued with St. Paul's thoughts, and thoroughly apprehended what he calls "his gospel." If, as Tertullian so unhesitatingly asserts, St. Barnabas

* To this last most recent criticism agrees in ascribing it.

was he, we can well understand that St. Paul's fellow-apostle to the Gentiles would be likely to treat his subject much in the same way as St. Paul himself would have done. The epistle then becomes the word of the Gentile apostleship to the believers from among the circumcision ; and shows that, whatever division of labour may for convenience be adopted, to every Apostle really pertains the care of all the churches.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

How Jesus feeds His People.

John vi. 1-14.

THE narrative of to-day's gospel instructs us as to the manner in which the Lord feeds His people when they gather to Him.

First, He does it out of such material as is furnished Him. It would have been as easy for Him to have created loaves and fishes as to have multiplied them. But He did not. He called upon His servants for what they could supply, and then made that suffice for the great multitude. And so it is now. He "speaketh from heaven," not with a naked voice, as it were new-made for the purpose, but through the lips and from the minds of men. He takes the few thoughts and feeble words they bring, and makes them effectual to quicken and sustain all who depend upon Him. "What are these among so many?" Nothing indeed, but for His multiplying blessing, for His word of bidding. But with these enough and to spare for multitudes ever so great.

Secondly, the barley loaves and the small fishes were themselves brought to the Apostles by one of the company;—"there is a lad here which hath" them. The ministers of God do not stand alone: "we live, as ye stand fast in the Lord." They depend upon the body, as the body depends upon them. Only in their

hands does the provision become multiplied for all; but it may come to their hands from the youngest or humblest of the flock. Let all be encouraged, therefore, to bring up their meat offerings,—not looking on the smallness of the thing, for the Lord can make it great, if He will. Bring them up, if perchance they are the very loaves and fishes with which He intends to feed His people. In your hands they must continue five and two, as they are; but in those of His servants they may supply five thousand souls.

Thirdly, observe the goodly order of the feeding. There is no rushing forward to take directly from His hand. "Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down." He has entrusted the ministration of His blessing to His ordained servants; and they who would receive from Him must receive at their hands. That "feeding themselves without fear" of which St. Jude speaks does not get the bread of life for its pains, but only grapes of Sodom and apples of Gomorrha. Christ's food is dispensed by those whom He sends.

And lastly, when all are fed, what remains for the ministering servants themselves? Are they mere instruments? have they no share in the feast? Nay: they shall find that while they have been caring for others, they themselves have been cared for. Each shall have his basketful for his own needs, for all have eaten. The utterance of the word of truth shall have cleared his own vision of it: the speaking of warning or comfort shall have quickened his own sense of the things ministered on. And so the Christ in him shall grow, as the Christ from him goes forth to all with "I can do."

We have said these things, as regards the grace of Christ in general. But they are specially true of the holy Feast to which from time to time we draw near. Here too the people bring up the elements of the banquet to Christ's servants, that they may offer them to the Lord. And when at His altar the thanks have been given, and the grace of blessing and consecration has come down, then again He distributes to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude, and all are filled, and the fragments are gathered up. The flock of God is fed, and His shepherds go away with strengthening and enrichment. So may He feed us here below, till

“With all His saints above,
Sitting at the feast of love,
We shall see Him face to face.”

Jesus the Mediator.

1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

If there is any one title of our Lord Jesus Christ in which is contained the whole substance of His office and work, it is this of *Mediator*. All other names of Him express what He is towards God, or what He is towards man. But a mediator is not a mediator of one. He has aspects towards both the parties between whom he transacts. In naming “the Man Christ Jesus,” therefore, the one Mediator between God and man, we imply that His work looks both God-ward and man-

ward. And, so far as the word mediation carries us, so far we express also the nature of this dual-visaged working.

I say, so far as the word mediation carries us. And it carries us a very long way. It tells of the manner in which has been effected the atonement between heaven and earth, the reconciliation between God and man. It has been effected by a mediator, a go-between, or, as we say, "a mutual friend." There is much significance in this last phrase, common-place though it is. We are not using mere synonymous terms when we say, "through Jesus Christ our *Mediator* and *Advocate*." An advocate belongs to one side only. His whole duty is to make the best of that cause in favour of which he is retained. But a mediator must be an advocate of both sides. He must not only understand the nature of the dispute or the cause of the alienation, but he must also be possessed of the mind and purpose of both parties, and must have the interests of both at heart. Such a "mutual friend" is the only sure peacemaker between man and man; and to name the Lord Jesus "Mediator" implies such a relationship on His part as regards man and God. The basis of the relationship is laid in the twofold nature of the Mediator: what He does He does because of what He is. Being in the form of God, He has the mind of God, and comes manifesting His character and doing His will: being made in the likeness of men, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and afflicted in all our afflictions. He is able thus on the one hand to reveal God to man, and on the other to present man before God: and in so revealing and so presenting to plead the cause of the one with the other, God's cause with man, and man's cause with God; to be the daysman who can lay

His hand upon both ; to establish understanding and effect reconciliation.

Let us at this time contemplate the action of Jesus Christ as Mediator from God man-ward.

It is not too much to say that the whole work of Christ, in dealing with man on behalf of God, is summed up in this—that He *revealed* God.

We say commonly of any very good man—"You have only to know him in order to love him." And in quarrels between man and man, it often happens that the only hindrance to reconciliation lies in ignorance one of the other's mind. These are laws of human nature; and it is not surprising that they should find place in the actings of the one Mediator between God and man. Man's conception of Deity had hitherto embraced the idea of power and wisdom only, without the necessary association of love and goodness. He had felt himself an offender against the laws of this Mighty One: but he had not known of the forgiveness which was in His heart. Even the Jew, though he had been told of these things, had not made them part of his thought and life. Jesus Christ therefore came to men bringing the knowledge of Him who alone is good, even God, that, enamoured of His beauty, they might love Him and cleave to Him utterly. He revealed to the offender in the quarrel the perfect love and forgiveness which endure in the offended One, and so made peace and reconciliation possible. Manifesting at the same time that God hates the sin as truly as He loves the sinner, He made repentance and renewal of life essential elements of the reconciliation. And so it is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

This revelation was made, not in word only, but in life. Of the former indeed it is true that "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him": that, lying in that bosom before the foundation of the world, He now, clothed with flesh, spake that He knew and testified that He had seen. But ~~we~~ know that the words a man speaks never have so much influence as the life he lives. And so it is well for us that the words of the Lord Jesus came not as it were from an automaton; but were part of a real human life lived among us. That life was as true a revelation of God as was any word that He spake. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He seeth the Father do, these also doeth the Son likewise." "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Let us apply this truth to the facts recorded in the Scriptures of Him.

The plainest utterance of that blessed life was that to which the beloved Apostle afterwards gave expression, saying, "God is love." Jesus Christ is loving, therefore God is love. Here is One full of the tenderest human sympathy, who uses His mighty power only for works of blessing; who goes about doing good, and healing all that are oppressed of the devil; who loves to restore to the mourners the daughter, the son, the brother:—and this Man of love is the image of the invisible God. See then His love overcoming all repugnance, leading Him among publicans and sinners, pardoning the Magdalene and the woman taken in adultery, interceding for His enemies and tormentors:—and still it is the glory of

God which we see in the face of Jesus Christ. Rise then to the height of this contemplation, and behold the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. Behold Him who was in the form of God emptying Himself, and taking upon Him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. And when we have apprehended His love in this its sublimest form of sacrifice, we still see only the brightness of His glory who spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all; who commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

But the Lord Jesus could not have said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," had He manifested nothing else but God's love for the sinner. Co-eval and co-essential in the mind of God with love of His creature stands hatred of his sin. Indeed it is part of His love; which is no easy kindness, that indulges itself by liking rather than hating, but a consuming, an inexorable passion which will never stop short of the entire devotion of its object to itself. Jesus Christ manifests not only the goodness but the severity of God. He that said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest,"—He it was who, devoured by zeal for His Father's house, scourged forth the polluters of its holy precincts. He that ate with publicans and sinners if by any means He might save some,—from His lips came those terrible woes upon the scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, before which the communions of mount Ebal are feeble and tame. And in His cross and passion we see an expression of the same mind. The sufferings of Christ are the measure, not so much of what God inflicts, as

of what He feels, because of sin. Words could not tell us this; but in Christ crucified we see it. The suffering took its form from the humanity He had assumed; but the mind of it was Divine, and one in the Son and in the Father. This is love indeed: but love so rooted in holiness that it cannot be happy while sin persists in its object, that it must express itself in sorrow and anguish where these are possible, that it rejoices only in the sure hope of the rising of those who are fallen, and returns to bliss only as their pledge and forerunner.

Thus in word and in deed, in life and in death, Jesus the Mediator has revealed the Father. And what is our response to this revelation? • Surely the *faith* which accepts it, which realises its significance, and follows out its consequences. And with faith must come *love* for Him who thus is shown to have first loved us; and *peace* with Him who thus in Christ is seen reconciling the world unto Himself; and *joy* because of the pearl of great price which we have found in this so great salvation. Has our faith this love, this joy, this peace accompanying it? It must have, in proportion as it is a living thing, and not a mere assent to a creed or a tradition. It is the opening of the eye to see what God is towards us as expressed by the gift of His Christ. And when we see it, it must follow as the night the day that we love Him for it, and have peace with Him through it, and rejoice in Him because of it. Let us pray, then, for the seeing eye, that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which is in the face of Jesus Christ may shine in upon our hearts, and set them vibrating responsively. From hearts so touched repentance for past sin will flow spontaneously, and no less so abhorrence of it for

the future ; and faith thus mingled with love will work by that love, and bring forth all fruit of good living. Verily, O our Father, is it life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

Jesus the Mediator.

II.

WE began last Sunday, to meditate upon our Lord Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and man. We regarded Him as acting in this capacity in the great atonement that was needed between heaven and earth, the reconciliation of man with God. He effects this by the sympathy with both which grows out of His relation to both. Because He is God, He can represent God's case to man ; because He is man, He can represent man's case to God. We confined ourselves on that occasion to the former division of His work,—His action from God man-ward. And this we saw to stand essentially in one thing,—that He *revealed* God. In word and in work, in life and in death, He manifested to man the very heart of the Father, full of pardoning love towards His rebellious children, but because of that love unable to bear with their sin. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself”: and when we see the marred visage of the Man of sorrows, we see the mind of God as it is grieved by our sin, no less than in the “Father, forgive them” and “thy sins be forgiven thee” we hear the same God not imputing to us our trespasses. Such revelation of God moves us on the one hand to

repentance and holiness, as on the other to love and peace and joy. These must be our response to it, if with the eye of faith we see it as it is.

Let us now reverse the picture. What man sees in Christ, as He faces us, is the revelation of God. Let us consider a little what God saw in Him, as He looked upwards out of manhood; what Christ intended Him to see; in a word, what was the acting of the Mediator from man God-ward.

Briefly, we might say this, that as Christ manifests God to man, so He manifests man to God. But, in the former case, He has but to show the Person He reveals as He is: in the latter—in manifesting man to God—He has to show him as he should be, as he must needs be. Coming into manhood, He realises all that it is and all that it has been: looking at God out of it, He does so in the true mind of its origin and history. He takes up at once and continually the attitude proper to the creature, and the creature that has sinned. That attitude is expressed in one word—*sacrifice*.

If man had never sinned, sacrifice might still have been his true mode of approach to God. Sacrifice without death perhaps, in some innocent offering by fire of the fruits of the earth or libation of wine,—but still sacrifice. Some giving to God, some giving up of ourselves, to express our sense of dependence and our obligation to devotion, would be the fittest manner of our worship. The saints in glory express this, when they *cast their crowns* before the throne, saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power.” And the eternal Son Himself expressed it, when, before coming into the world, ere yet He had assumed the body which had been prepared for Him, He said, “Lo! I come, to do Thy will, O

God."* This mind He brought into manhood; and there manifested it. In the entire devotion of His whole life He presented before God man as he should be; and He presented him in sacrifice. He was the "whole burnt-offering" of the Law of Moses, consumed on the altar of God's service, and in the fire of His Spirit. He gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour; and herein did just that which was fitting for man to do, which was obligatory upon him by his creation, which has been made possible for him by his redemption.

But there was more than this. The nature which the Son of God assumed was that, not only of a creature, but of a creature that had sinned. Realising this, *death* became a necessary part of His doing the will of God, of His fulfilment of His law written in His heart. But the realisation led Him further still. The death in which His obedience culminated† was also felt by Him in all its woeful meaning: He endured it as the wages of sin and the curse of a broken law. It was more than the accessory of His burnt-offering; it was the very essential act of His *sin-offering*. Here the slain victim was neither consumed in dedication, nor (as in the peace-offering) eaten in communion: it was burned without the camp as a thing accursed. Jesus our Lord exhausted the full meaning of this in the depths of His spirit: He was made sin for us,—He was made a curse for us. God in manhood could not do otherwise; for the same Mind which inflicted the penalty now endured it. Man had only dimly realised his punishment; but God in manhood could not die without feeling therein the terrible burden of sin, and

* See Wednesday before Easter.

† Phil. ii. 8.

being overshadowed as with a horror of great darkness. In dying, He made His soul an offering for sin ; and God accepted it at His hand.

Thus in burnt-offering and sin-offering alike Christ has one action from man God-ward, viz.: to represent him before God as he should and must needs be. Because of his creature standing, man should consecrate himself to his Maker : because he had sinned, he should pour out his life before Him in contrition and confession. He had failed to do either ; and so stood at enmity with God. Christ the Mediator did both ; and by Him God is satisfied with man, God is reconciled to man. Before one single soul of mankind had trodden the new and living way which He had thus opened for us, the satisfaction was felt, the reconciliation effected. He trod the way and so became it : * He, the great Penitent, presented His sin-offering of Himself, and so became the High Priest who could carry its blood into the holiest of all, and is now over the house of God, giving boldness to enter therein to all who come unto God by Him.† All future relations between God and man were potentially contained in those which were established when Jesus, dying, rose again and ascended into heaven. The new covenant was made with Him ; and then He became its Mediator ; for His brethren of mankind.

So in Christ, as He faces man-ward, we behold God as He is ; and as He faces God-ward, we behold man as he should be. The former, moves us to arise and go unto our Father ; the latter shews us the way by which we should go. There is no other way to God but that which Christ has first trodden for us, which

* John xiv. 6.

† Heb. x. 19-22.

‡ Heb. vii. 24.

He Himself is. But that way surely leads to the goal. We tread it, in proportion as we are one with Him who is it. We fail indeed to attain to the entireness of His self-devotion ; and we are not even called to His bearing of the burden and curse of sin,—the Lord has not laid on us the iniquity of all. But as we grow into His mind, our burnt-offering becomes more whole, and our sin-offering, though of lesser kind,* more heart-felt and sincere. We gather boldness to enter into the holiest, as His blood sprinkles our hearts from the evil conscience of guilt, and our bodies are washed with the pure water of His renewing Spirit.† The Mediator of the new covenant, the High Priest over the house of God, takes us by the hand, and leads us into the presence of His Father and our Father, of His God and our God.

Is it so with you, my reader? Do you know this way to God? Is it a familiar one to you, full of sacred associations and roadside memories? Do not think that you are treading it because you come to church, and join in divine ordinances, and hear scriptures and preaching. These are features of the way, but not the way itself. Sacraments pave and line it: holy words are its guideposts: but the way itself is Christ. Only by personal knowledge of Him as our Saviour and our Life do we livingly draw near to God.

And further,—that is no coming by Christ which regards Him as the revealer and example, but does not see Him in both as the Lamb slain. If we are come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, we are come also unto the “blood of sprinkling”: if we would have boldness to enter into the holiest, it must be “by

* See “Creation and Redemption.” 3rd Ed. p. 248. † Tit. iii. 5.

the blood of Jesus." By His own blood He entered therein once: with our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by the same blood we have access there continually, and only thus. •

But there is another and more subtle error into which some have fallen. It is that of lingering by the way, instead of following it up to the goal. It is indeed impossible so to do, if we are really treading the way to be Christ's is necessarily to be God's, as He is.* But there is a regarding the work of Christ as an end rather than a means; there is a taking refuge in it from God in place of drawing near in it to God. Such a refuge will crumble to pieces around us. For instance, —we never avail ourselves more fully of the Cross of Christ than when, having fallen into sin, we seek in humble confession the grace of absolution and forgiveness. But it makes all the difference how we regard this transaction. If it be as a process whereby we spiritually draw near to God, and regain that likeness to Him which our transgression has marred,—happy are we: according to our faith shall it be to us. But if our thought be simply the escaping the penal consequences of our sin, whether here or hereafter—then there is no more security for us than for the unmerciful servant in the parable, that we shall not go out from our Lord's presence to refuse forgiveness to our brother, and to find the load of seemingly-pardoned transgression rolled back again upon our souls.

So let us come by Christ, and come as forgiven sinners; and come to God. And then will His work be accomplished as our Mediator; for He died for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER.

The Mind that was in Christ Jesus.

Philippians ii. 5-11.

THE meditation of this scripture, which is indeed the epistle of the day, may well prepare our thoughts for the holy week on which we have entered.

The Apostle has been exhorting the Philippians, that they do nothing through strife or vainglory ; but that in lowliness of mind each esteem other better than themselves ; that they look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. As an example of such conduct he cites the Lord Himself. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." But he refers not merely, as ordinarily, to His life on earth as the occasion of His example. The "was" in Christ Jesus" points farther back,—to the time before He was made in the likeness and found in the fashion of man.

He is described at this time as "being," that is, subsisting "in the form of God." What does this phrase mean ? "Form" (*μορφή*) sometimes signifies the appearance as distinct from the reality, as when we read of those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. Does it mean this here. Not so. For "being in the form of God" is set against "took

* It is not meant that this word is in the original, but it fitly represents the reference immediately about to be made.

upon Him the form of a servant"; and as the latter implies that He became really man, so the former must mean that He was really God. But yet the word "form" is not used without a definite purpose: "being in the form of God" is not the same as "being in the nature of God," though that also is true. The form is the outward manifestation of the nature, the impression which it makes, its visible attributes.—in a word, its "glory." It was this "form" of God of which He emptied Himself when He became man, which He exchanged for the form of a servant. He laid by His omniscience and His omnipotence, and came within the limitations of humanity. He grew in wisdom as in stature: He wrought no mighty work but by the Holy Ghost given to Him as man: He spake the words of God, because God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him. He could not cease to subsist in the nature of God; but without the form of God He could and did for a while manifest Himself. He received it again when the glory of His ascension supplied the antithesis to the emptying of His incarnation. For so He had prayed—"And now, O Father, glorify me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

Being thus in the form of God, He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." It is not well to introduce new translations; but this is a phrase which yields no meaning in its present rendering. It is not an additional characteristic to "bring in the form of God," as if it were "and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God." It rather begins to describe the action of the person thus characterized to which we are directed as our example. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the

form of God thought it not robbery" and so on. But it is difficult to see anything to imitate in the Son of God thinking it no robbery to be equal with the Father. Again, it is antithetically connected with the next clause by a "but." Yet the "but" is meaningless as it stands. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation." It is evident that we must seek another rendering of the words; and it is the consentient judgment of the best modern scholars, as it was that of the Greek fathers, that we should read them thus—"He counted not His equality with God a thing to be grasped at."* The word translated "robbery" does not essentially involve the thought of stealing; it means snatching or grasping *for* oneself, but not necessarily *from* another. And now the sense comes clearly out. We are to look not every man on his own things, but to think as Christ Jesus thought. Equality with God was one of His own things; but His thought was not how to keep fast hold of it and to enjoy it. He looked not on His own things, but on the things of others; and though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. "Being in the form of God, He counted not His equality with God a thing to be grasped at, but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant."

Many thoughts arise in our minds as we realise these words of the Apostle. One of them can hardly fail to be,—how clear is his vision of the Godhead of the Lord Jesus, that doctrine which is sometimes supposed to have been the growth of a later age, an apotheosis born of Roman adulation or of Greek philosophy.

* The rendering of the Revised Version of 1881.

Here it is in full existence in the eminently Hebrew mind of St. Paul; and not announced by him as a new revelation, but assumed to be the living faith of the Church. What is there in the Nicene Creed which is not a legitimate expression of the fact he recognizes—the Saviour's equality with God? Then add to this the Godhead of the Holy Ghost also, and you have the whole basis of the Creed of St. Athanasius. Let men acknowledge nothing but humanity in Jesus Christ if they must. But let them be honest, and admit that St. Paul and St. John held a very different doctrine, and worshipped their Master as very and eternal God.

And now—"He counted not His equality with God a thing to be grasped at, but emptied Himself." We are so accustomed to this rendering in the place of the less impressive phrase, "made Himself of no reputation," that I make no apology for substituting it. It refers, as has been said, to the form of God in which He was subsisting. Of this He emptied Himself, He became poor. There is only one attitude in which we can stand before this surpassing mystery of love. As when we recite it in the Creed, we bow our heads and adore.

"He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant." "Servant" is not merely equivalent to "man," for the next clause affirms that He was "made in the likeness of men." It marks the contrast between the equality with God which He enjoyed before His incarnation, and the condition into which He then came. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, He is inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. The servant is not an equal. As to the word "form," the remarks previously made will apply here also. The form is not an appearance only: it is the expres-

sion of an underlying reality. Yet it is the appearance, and not the substance; and the one may change while the other remains. Without ceasing to be God, He exchanged the form of God for the form of a servant when He became man. Without ceasing to be man, the form of a servant has now dropped off Him, and He has resumed the form of God. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He is set down with His Father in His throne. The angels of God worship Him, and all honour the Son even as they honour the Father.*

He "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." These two clauses specify the method of His emptying Himself. He emptied Himself by taking on Him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men. "But from this the recital takes a fresh start, so to speak. Hitherto what the Apostle has desired to illustrate has been the looking not every man off his own things, but every man also on the things of others. The example of this in Christ Jesus is His abdication for our sakes of His divine throne and dignity. But he had also been exhorting the Philippians to "lowliness of mind," i.e., humility (the word in the Greek is the same). And that this mind also was in Christ he now goes on to show. The very construction of the language implies that he is making a new beginning. "Being in the form of God," he had said: and now—"being found in fashion as a man." But observe the difference. The "being" is without qualification as regards His Godhead: it tells of an eternal mode of subsistence. But in relation to His manhood it is "being

* Comp. Rev. v., vii.

found"—it is something which is done in time. He is God, of the substance of His Father, begotten before the worlds (the ages): and He is man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world (in time).

"Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross." He had come into the limitations of humanity; yet as man He might have surrounded Himself with every dignity and luxury. The stones might have been made bread for Him; the kings of the earth His vassals; the angels of God His guardians against every injury. But He chose to obey rather than rule; to employ His manhood for its sensibility to suffering rather than for its capacity for enjoyment. He had power over His own life; but at the commandment of the Father He laid it down.* Nor did He choose the manner of His death, but accepted it in its shameful and agonizing form of crucifixion. "He humbled Himself in that He became obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross." "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? but how then must the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Here is the very spirit of the obedience unto death.

It is this of which we speak as "the example of His great humility." There are aspects of this virtue among men which He could not, in the nature of things, possess. Humility with us shows itself much in the ready acknowledgment of faults, and in the genuine recognition of the superiority of others to ourselves (in this latter aspect we call it modesty). He could not

* John x. 17, 18

be thus humble, for He had no faults to acknowledge and no superior on earth to recognise. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"—such utterances from any but Him would be pride. But humility just means seeking the ground, being lowly. It is the taking the lowest seat, and the submitting one's own will to the will of another. Of this the whole life of the Lord Jesus was indeed one continual example; and humility, unknown to the Pagan, has ever formed a chief element in the Christian character, which is the imitation of Christ.

"Wherefore"—that is, because he that humbleth himself shall be exalted—"God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." The whole statement now precisely corresponds in its three stages with that of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power"—here is the pre-existent Godhead—"when He had by Himself purged our sins"—here is the obedience unto death—"He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent *name* than they." He hath given him a name which is above every name. Not a new name importing such pre-eminence; but the very name which He received as a human infant—Jesus—the Saviour of His people from their sins. This is the name which is now first among those that are written in heaven, far above that of highest archangel. Once made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, He is now crowned with glory and honour, and set over all the creatures of God's hand. "He is gone

into heaven," says St. Peter, "and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." "God raised Him from the dead," writes St. Paul to the Ephesians, "and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

You will observe that with all these Apostles the word is "God exalted Him," "God set Him above principalities and powers," "He was made so much better than the angels." He takes His place, not as of right, but receiving it as reward from His Father's hand; even as He Himself will give their place to those who conquer in His might. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." That the eternal Son receives His very Godhead from the eternal Father, that He is God of God and Light of Light—is a truth well nigh inconceivable. He takes flesh that He may manifest it to us. Now we see the Son receiving everything from the Father. He has emptied Himself; and it is God who glorifies Him, although it be with the very glory which He had with Him before the world was.

And now what is the object of His exaltation? It is "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." This is putting in other words that which David heard in vision—"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool"; and that "He hath put all things under his feet." The one blessedness

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for all mankind is that they shall know and serve the rightful King; and what is their blessedness is His glory. This is the work of the Spirit, whom the Father sends in His name. When in His name every knee shall bow, when every tongue shall confess His lordship, then the purpose of His exaltation shall be accomplished.

And what will He then do? Will He retire still farther into the Godhead, and seem to divide with His Father the worship of the universe? Will He once more count His equality with God a thing to be grasped at, a vantage ground for honour and dignity? Not so. His exaltation has yet an ultimate object beyond that we have seen. It is "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.*" "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." He shall come down from His Father's throne, and sit on His own throne with His Church, His bride and queen. Together, as the Second Adam with His Eve, they shall lead up to God the worship of the new creation.

"These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty, Thine this everlasting frame!"

We shall indeed believe in one God, the Father Almighty, when we see His only begotten Son the High Priest of His worshippers, the first of His subjects, the example and motive of obedience and worship to all.

So ends this wonderful statement. It begins in eternity, when the Word was with God, and was God. It follows Him as He is made flesh, and dwells among

us. It goes down with Him into death, and ascends with Him into glory ; and leaves Him at last with an adoring universe at His feet, Himself presenting its homage with His own to the one God and Father of all. And now, to what purpose is it made ? Simply that we, partaking of the mind which was (and is) in Christ Jesus, may in humility consider others rather than ourselves,—may look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. The Apostle goes for his illustration, not only to the doings of the Word made flesh, which would be high enough ; but to the very depths of the Divine. Christ Jesus began to be our example before He appeared on earth, before the Gospels tell of Him. Its first step is that He, being very and eternal God, dwelling with His Father before all time in glory and blessedness unspeakable, came down from heaven in perfect love, from perfect love, and became very man for our salvation.

Let this mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus. Have we anything of our own, any surroundings of splendour, any equality with greatness ? Let us not count them as things to be held tenaciously, to be grasped for their own sakes, as materials of enjoyment or occasions of honour. Let us be ready to empty ourselves and become poor, if by so doing we can enrich our brethren. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus (words not recorded by any evangelist, but learnt and treasured up by St. Paul), how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Indeed we shall find it so,—more blessed to give up our own way than to have it, to sacrifice than to enjoy, to obey than to rule, to minister, than to be ministered unto. The cross means this ; the manger at Bethlehem meant it ; and the end of the mediatorial kingdom will mean it. "Being

in the form" of God, He emptied Himself." "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself." "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject." This mind is in God, that it may be in us, who are made in His image and can only be perfected as we attain unto His likeness.

O Son of the Most High, what self-abnegation is this of Thine! What have we wherein we can resemble Thee, wherewith we can follow in Thy footsteps? Dost Thou accept our pale shadow of Thy perfections? dost Thou count us like Thee when we resign, when we submit, when we deny ourselves? Form Thou Thy mind in us! draw us after Thee, that we may follow Thee whithersoever Thou leadest! Glorify Thy Name in us and in all mankind, that so Thy patience may have fruit, and the kingdom of Thy Father and our Father may come, and His will be done in earth as now it is done in heaven. Amen.

MONDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Moses and Phinehas making Atonement.

HOLY Scripture is rich in instruction regarding atonement, both as it is in itself, and as it was wrought out by our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps the institution of sacrifice contains such instruction in its fullest measure. But, after all, an animal can hardly exhibit the actings of the Son of God in our flesh. It is man who is made in His image: and if we can find any instance in which the words and acts of men, irrespective of their office, have had power to make atonement, it must throw special light upon the mind which was in Christ Jesus. We have two such examples in the Old Testament,—in the cases respectively of Moses and Phinehas.

The scene of the first lies at the foot of Mount Sinai.* While Moses has communed thereon with God, the people have relapsed in his absence into their old idolatry. On his return he finds them in the midst of wild orgies in honour of the golden calf they have set up. His first act indeed is to destroy the instrument of their transgression, and to execute judgment upon the leaders in the offence. But the narrative proceeds:—

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I

* Exod. xxxii-xxxiv.

will go up unto the Lord ; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold ! Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin ;—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

Observe, then, how Moses makes atonement. Towards the transgressors, he is as one convincing of sin ; destroying its occasions and cutting off the offending members of the community. And then he comes before God, and, himself free from the sin, confesses it, intercedes for the sinners, and devotes himself to bear, if possible or necessary, the full penalty of their wrong-doing.

The whole narrative deserves the fullest attention as illustrating the work of the Mediator. The fruit of the atonement made is seen in the renewal of the tables of the covenant, which the transgression had caused to be broken ; in the restoration of the Lord's presence with His people ; in the showing of His glory. But the point on which our attention is to be directed is the manner of making the atonement. For it illustrates, as by a picture of God's own limning, the work of His Son. He who, facing man-ward, convinced of sin, condemned sin in the flesh, and so wrought that the body of sin should be destroyed,—He, facing God-ward, was the Confessor, the Intercessor, the willing Sin-bearer. And because of His atonement thus made the new covenant is given, men become the habitation of God through the Spirit, and we, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The second instance is that of Phinehas, of which we read in Numbers xxv. 6-13. It is the action man-ward

which is prominent in this atonement. Phinehas is not confessor, intercessor, or sin-bearer. But he was zealous for the Lord. "He stood up, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed." "Phinehas" said the Lord "hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake" (*Heb.* with my zeal) "among them." And the words which follow are very remarkable: "Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even a covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and *made an atonement* for the children of Israel." One man was found who could say "Amen" to the righteous judgment of God; who could enter into fellowship with his hatred of sin, and execute His sentence upon it: and that man became the means of atonement. "It was counted unto him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore."

And if we have seen Jesus in Moses, quite as clearly is He manifest in Phinehas. He too, in the midst of a disobedient and adulterous generation, "stood up and executed judgment." But that through which His spear of righteous vengeance passed was His own body—that portion of the flesh that was sinning around Him which He had assumed. In Him it had been utterly sinless. But because of the evil which had been wrought in it, and was being wrought in it, and should yet be wrought in it to the end of time, He stood up in fellowship with God's mind concerning it, and executed His sentence of death upon it. Himself bare our sins in His own body upon the tree. And because of this "Amen" of His to God's righteous judgment, His death made atonement, propitiation, satisfaction. God has given indeed to Him His covenant of peace,—

even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. Righteousness is vindicated, and so the plague is stayed.

Such thoughts may help us somewhat in our contemplation of that mystery of love ineffable to which this week is sacred. Mystery, nevertheless, it must still remain, which our deepest thoughts cannot sound to the bottom, nor our most earnest contemplation perceive to the full,—which we only realise in any measure as we love with God's love, and are holy with His holiness.

TUESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Our High Priest on His Day of Atonement.

PART I.

We are led by many passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews to see in the appointed rites of the great day of Atonement a special type of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. We are about to commemorate the sacrifice of His death. Let us endeavour then, by God's grace, so to understand the type, that it may lead us into further and deeper knowledge of the blessed antitype.

First, let us trace the main outline of the rites appointed for this great day of observance.*

The high priest upon this occasion performed alone and unassisted all the holy offices. He began by presenting the daily morning sacrifice of burnt-offering: which he did in the rich and beautiful vestments pertaining to his office. These were now exchanged for garments of plain white linen, clothed in which he proceeded to the special office of the day. This consisted in the sin-offering of a bullock and a goat, which were slain in the usual manner at the door of the tabernacle. Their carcases were carried by the servants of the sanctuary without the holy precincts, and there utterly

* Levit. xvi.

consumed by fire. Meanwhile the high priest, taking the blood of the victims, and a golden censer full of incense, passed through the vail into the holy of holies, where he caused the incense to rise, and sprinkled the blood before the mercy-seat. He put the blood also upon the golden altar in the holy place, and upon the brazen altar in the outer court. Lastly, in the evening of the day he returned from the sanctuary; and, resuming his glorious garments, concluded all by offering the evening sacrifice.

In this outline I have omitted several minor incidents and points of detail, as tending to confuse our apprehension of the main facts whose significance we are to learn. I have also said nothing at present—and for the same reason—of the more important episode of the scapegoat; but this will come before us hereafter in its place.

Before proceeding to the interpretation of these rites, let us consider the impression which they must have made upon the mind of any pious and faithful Israelite. He could hardly have failed to see that the offices of this great day formed the root and ground and means of acceptance of all other sacrifices and offerings. The high priest ministering alone; the blood carried on into the holiest of all; the sprinkling therewith of every portion of the sacred furniture—all showed the sacrificial rites of this day to be universal, original, fundamental. They were evidently the standing memorial of that primary consecration of the covenant, when Moses "took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the

tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry."* And the whole thing was clearly something external to himself,—done for him, and without his participation. His only duty in connection with it was to do no manner of work, and to "afflict his soul."

Now let us conceive such an Israelite receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Its simplest declaration would supply him with the facts to which the rites of the day of Atonement point. For it tells of a work accomplished on our behalf and without our aid. It reveals the Agent in this work as Himself both priest and sacrifice,—dying, and yet giving Himself to death. It declares Him, after His death for us *here below*, ascended into heaven, making intercession for us *there*, purifying us by His blood, and about to come again in the evening of the age to finish the work He has begun. So far might any Jewish convert have appreciated the typical meaning of the day of Atonement even before the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. By that Epistle, however, the Church's knowledge of this type received a great enlargement. And now, aided by the prophetic light and apostolic teaching which have been vouchsafed to us in this day, we can follow it through most of its details with enlightenment and profit.

Without farther preface, let us proceed to consider each point in order.

1. Upon this day the high priest performs alone and unassisted all the rites and offices,—these being upon ordinary occasions open to any among the priesthood. In this we see set forth in the most forcible manner that character of the work of the Lord Jesus, in which

* Exod. xxiv. ; Heb. ix.

He stands as the one Mediator between God and man, transacting alone with His Father on our behalf, "by Himself purging our sins," accomplishing the whole work of our redemption without our lifting one finger or stirring one step to His aid. When He has finished the work, and His Father has accepted Him in it, then, and not till then, He calls to men to enter into its fellowship and share its blessings. When His sin-offering has been presented and accepted, then men may confess their sin, and be absolved. When His burnt-offering has gone up to God for a sweet-smelling savour, then all may present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is their reasonable service. Upon other days and other occasions we learn the manner whereby we may enter into this fellowship:—on the Day of Atonement we behold that original work in fellowship with which our acceptance with God consists.

Thanks be to Thy holy Name, O Jesu, perfect and only Saviour, for Thy precious work on our behalf! Without it we should have done nothing; and in it alone our imperfect doings find favour and acceptance.

WEDNESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Our High Priest on His Day of Atonement.

PART II.

2. THE high priest began his work by offering, in his usual beautiful vestments, the daily morning sacrifice. This sacrifice was not a sin-offering, but a burnt-offering. The distinctive thought involved in this form of sacrifice was *dedication*. It began indeed with the death of the victim and the sprinkling of its blood, since only through the portal of repentance and forgiveness, of confession and absolution, can the sinner draw near to present himself before God. But these were only preliminary to the consumption of the entire victim, with its meat offering and its drink-offering, in the fire of the brazen altar. Herein is symbolized the perfect dedication, the entire consecration of the whole man—body, soul, and spirit—to God's service; the surrender of the will, the renunciation of self, the devotion of all that we have and all that we are.

The morning sacrifice of our great High Priest is thus described in the Epistle to the Hebrews: *—

“ When He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me: . . . Then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.”

* Heb. x. 5.

“When He cometh into the world”—still arrayed therefore in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was—in this morning of the day of salvation He said, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God! yea, Thy law is within my heart.” Even before the Incarnation, then, there was a sacrifice offered by the Son, and accepted by the Father. It was the sacrifice of burnt-offering,—the surrender of self to do the Father’s will, the voluntary submission to every form of humiliation and suffering through which the necessities of the case might lead Him, that God might be glorified and man saved.

“Thou wast the Morning Lamb, Lord Jesus Christ!”

Angels and archangels may have assisted, adoring, at the sacrifice; but the Son alone could offer it.

3. We now see the high priest of Israel divesting himself of his glorious robes, and putting on the plain white linen garments proper to the special office of the day—the sin-offering. By this is symbolized the Incarnation of the Son of God. “Being in the form of God,” says St. Paul, “He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” In the “garments for glory and for beauty” of this “form of God” He hath laid Himself at His Father’s feet, a whole burnt-offering, to do His will. But now, to deal with sin, it is needful that He assume our inferior nature. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”*

4. The sin-offering on the day of Atonement consisted of a bullock and a goat. The use of these two animals under the law was very uniform and intelligible. The bullock always belonged to the priesthood; it was the appointed sin-offering in all cases where the sin to be atoned for affected the priesthood, or the people in their priestly relations. And upon the day of Atonement it was expressly ordered that Aaron should take the bullock "for himself, and make an atonement with it for himself, and for his house."^{*} To this the writer to the Hebrews alludes, when he says, speaking of the high priest's office,—"by reason hereof" (that is, of being compassed about with infirmity) "he ought, as for the people, so for himself, to offer for sins."[†] The goat, on the other hand, in the only place where its use is defined, is said to be "for the ruler";[‡] and the ruler is the representative of the people in their natural standing and civil relations. Thus it is consistent to read, as regards the day of Atonement— "Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering, *that is for the people.*"[§]

Now if the bullock be the sin-offering for the high priest himself, it would seem that it could have had no part in the sacrifice of Christ, who is without sin. But let us hear the Epistle to the Hebrews:—

"Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated (*Gr.*) from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; *for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.*"

* *Lev. xvi. 6.* † *Heb. v. 3.* ‡ *Lev. iv. 22.* § *Ibid. xvi. 15.*

|| *Ch. vii. 26, 27.*

Observe that the contrast is not—"Who needeth not, as they, to offer first for His own sins and then for the people's" but—"Who needeth not"—now, in His glorified state—"to do this daily, for He did it once for all."

In what sense, then, can He who is without sin be said to have offered for His own sins? The same Epistle gives us the answer:—

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. . . . For every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, . . . who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so for himself, to offer for sins. . . . So also Christ . . . in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him, called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec."

No words of our own shall be added to this picture; it is one rather for the silence of devout thought and hallowed meditation.

But if it be asked, "What is the house" (that is, family) "of this High Priest for whom, as for Himself, the bullock was offered?" the answer is not difficult.

It includes all who share in His priesthood, who like Him are ordained for men in things pertaining to God. And, in a larger sense, it embraces the whole Church, which in Him is a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices. The sins which she commits are different from those of common men; they pierce with a special pang the heart of her Lord and Husband; they are priestly sins, marring her witness and ministry to the world, choking its communications, and impeding its access to God. With the pressure of these foreseen offences upon His soul, He offered the priestly bullock for Himself and for His House. But He is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world. The goat, as well as the bullock, finds its place in His offering. The ordinary sins of ordinary men were all borne by Him, and confessed and absolved in His person; so that He is the Saviour of all men, though specially of them that believe.

THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Our High Priest on His Day of Atonement.

PART III.

5. THE high priest slew the sin-offerings at the door of the tabernacle; and, then, taking of their blood, passed in with it through the veil to the holiest of all. The latter part of the type was fulfilled, as we are taught,* in His ascension. What act of His, then, answers to the former?

The answer will be,—His death upon the cross: and unquestionably it is here only that the sacrifice of the Divine Victim was consummated. But there is a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews which leads us to view the scene of Calvary in the light of a later part of the type. “The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, *are burned without the camp*. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered without the gate*.† Earlier than this, therefore, there must have been something answering to the slaying of the victims at the door of the tabernacle; nor need we look far to find it. On the evening of this day before He suffered, Jesus took bread, and brake it, and said, “This is my body, which is (now being) broken for you.” Again, He took the cup into which wine had been poured, and said,

* Heb. ix. 24.

† Ibid. xiii. 11, 12.

"This is my blood of the New Testament, which is (now being) shed for many for the remission of sins." By these acts and in these words our Lord did verily and indeed make His soul an offering for sin. Standing before His disciples, living and unharmed, He nevertheless held forth the broken bread and the poured-out wine, and said, "This is my body, broken: this is my blood, shed." And therefore the Apostle tells us that as often as we eat that bread and drink that cup, we do shew the Lord's *death* till He come. We could not do so in the celebration of the Supper had He not done so in its institution: if we shew His death there in commemoration, He must have shewn it by anticipation. The morrow saw the actual immolation; but here was the Priest at the altar. Our services this day signify the truth thus stated. We celebrate the Eucharist in especial memorial of its institution. Therein we shew the Lord's death as He shewed it, as it essentially was, a sacrifice to God. Then the bread and wine at this time consecrated and offered are borne forth to a place without the sanctuary, where they are reserved during the night. On Good Friday the same bread and wine are brought forth, and without any further act of commemorative sacrifice are consumed by us, in the silence of sorrow and contrition of spirit.

In the passion of our Lord we are thus, as by the teaching of the scripture we have cited, led to see the antitype of the consumption of the bodies of the victims by fire without the camp. The offering at the door of the tabernacle was a priestly act; but this was performed by servants, who became by doing it unclean until the evening. So Jesus offered Himself on Holy Thursday; but on Good Friday Herod and the rulers of the Jews

and all the people laid hold upon Him, and with wicked hands crucified and slew Him. His blood is upon them and upon their children; and all Israel shall remain unclean because of it until the evening of this age. Nor did the consciousness of Jesus fail to correspond with the circumstances which surrounded Him. He was made sin for us; He was made a curse for us: and He knew it. But as the darkness deepens, and the ghostly enemies gather around, and we draw near to the "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani?" we need another portion of the type to express the meaning of what we see. And this I think we have in the *scape-goat*.

Behold, then, besides the goat of the sin-offering, another. That is for the Lord; but this for Azazel, the evil spirit.* All the iniquities of the children of Israel are confessed and put upon its head; and it is sent away alive into the wilderness, there to bear upon it all their iniquities into a land not inhabited. If any have seen the picture of "The Scape-goat" which his brush has painted who gave us "The Light of the World," they will have been aided to realise what it means. In the visage of the poor animal, as it stumbles along the salt blocks of the shores of the Dead Sea, is seen the suffering and the horror of utter *loneliness*,—so terrible to a creature of gregarious habits.

This type also, with its further and darker hints of delivery over to Satan, did our blessed Lord exhaust. This was the hour and the power of darkness.† The Prince of this world came, though he found nothing in Him.‡ But there fell upon the soul of Jesus the horror of great darkness, in which He seemed forsaken, not of man only, but of God. Hitherto He had been able

* See Readings on the Liturgy, vol. I. p. 359

† Luke xxii. 53.

‡ John xiv. 30.

to say, when even His disciples deserted Him—"And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me!"* But now—"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, so that my heart faileth me." "Lord, why castest Thou off my soul? why hidest Thou Thy face from me? Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; Thy terrors have cut me off. Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

"O Jesu, Victim blest!
What else but love divine
Could Thee constrain to open thus
That sacred heart of Thine?"

May the same love constrain us, that we henceforth live not unto ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again!

GOOD FRIDAY.

The Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings.

It is directed that upon this day the Holy Communion shall be administered in silence. No anthem shall be sung, or prayer said, or benediction given: but the people shall depart in silence, meditating upon the passion of the Lord.

In taking the Passion of the Lord Jesus out from among the many incidents of His life, and making it a special theme for meditation, we are effecting no mere arbitrary separation. His Passion was a definite period, a pre-arranged order of events, a distinct portion of the work He wrought on our behalf. From an early period of His public ministry its horror of great darkness became visible before Him, and cast a shadow broad and deep upon the path He trod towards it. He spoke of it as the "hour," the "cup," the "baptism." "This is your *hour*, and the power of darkness." "Father, save me from this *hour*; but for this cause came I to this *hour*: Father, glorify Thy name." "I have a *baptism* to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." "Can ye drink of the *cup* that I drink of, and be baptized with the *baptism* that I am baptized withal?" The agony in the garden, bitter as it was, was but the foretaste of the sharper agony of the Passion itself. His prayer then was, "Father, if it be possible, let this *cup* pass from me!"

And when in humble submission He was able to say, "O my Father, if this *cup* may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done," then He received the cup from the Father's hand. When Judas drew near, He said, "The *hour* is at hand: the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." And when Peter drew the sword to defend Him, He commanded, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the *cup* which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

The minutes of this sad hour, the ingredients of this bitter cup, the drops of this fiery baptism, are recorded for our instruction in the Holy Gospels. We listen to-day to the narrative of the Passion, as it is given us therein. And then in our meditations we follow its progress, accompanying each step with one of those psalms in which the Spirit has sung beforehand of the sorrows of the Christ. First, we see the eternal Son, the Lord of glory, coming into our fallen humanity, that He might be able to sympathise with our sorrows and bear the burden of our sin. He stands the one sinless One, and the one sinner;—the only human being free from the disease, and yet the only one who really knows its exceeding sinfulness. Thus in the day of the fierce anger of Almighty God against sin He alone is afflicted. He bears the weight of the sin of the world, that He may confess it before God, condemn it on the cross, and receive its absolution in His resurrection. Then the tender Master and Friend is deserted by His disciples, and wounded in the house of His friends. Then the guiltless One is falsely accused and unjustly condemned. Then He who came in perfect love, from perfect Love, is exposed to the injuries and insults of loveless men. All these elements of suffering must have been tenfold more bitter from

the very tenderness, the guiltlessness, the love of the heart which endured them. Another step,—and that worn and marred frame hangs writhing on the accursed tree, and the long hours of agony wear slowly on. The last and bitterest trial had yet to come. Before this He had said—“The hour is come that ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” He had not then tasted the full bitterness of sin, nor endured its heaviest burden in His most holy spirit. But now, as from the earth rose up the blackness of darkness, and blotted out the noonday sun, so over the soul of Jesus spread the cloud of the sin He was bearing, and hid from Him His Father’s face. We hear Him utter that exceeding bitter cry—“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” We seem to follow His thoughts along that saddest of psalms; until at last its note is changed. “Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. . . . He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath He hid His face from him, but when he cried unto Him, He heard.” “When Thou hadst endured this, Thy faith did straightway scatter the oppression, which passed from Thy soul as the darkness from the earth. And then with steadfast confidence Thou gavest up the ghost, committing Thy spirit unto the Father. Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.”

The Apostle St. Paul, in a well-known passage,* desires that he may know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death, if by any means

he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead. What is this fellowship of Christ's sufferings which we are to seek in our measure to have?

1. No small part of those sufferings stood in sheer bodily anguish. The enforced watching and fasting of that long April night brought Him already wearied to the judgment hall. Then the rude and brutal soldiers rend Him with their scourges, and His sacred brow is lacerated by the crown of thorns. Then the heavy cross is laid upon Him as they go to Golgotha, until He faints through pain and anguish, and they transfer it to another. Then comes the piercing the hands and the feet, the lifting up between earth and heaven, and the long weary agony of that cruellest of deaths—by crucifixion. Are these the sufferings we are to aspire to share? Was it well of those who, in times of persecution, courted for themselves the martyr's death, thinking that thereby in an especial manner they became partakers of Christ's sufferings? We cannot say that it was well. It is possible to die after the form of Christ's death, without one particle of its spirit. It is possible even to die for Christ, when there is no steady will to live for Him. The martyr's death is not necessarily the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; nor is it necessary to that fellowship. For the few who are called to bleed as He bled, there are a multitude whose conformity to His death must be otherwise effected.

2. Look we now upon another aspect of His Passion, Behold we the Lamb of God, as He bears—to take away—the sin of the world. Every transgression that has been committed or shall be committed was then present to Him; and He made it all His own. "Mine iniquities" He cried "are more than the hairs of mine

head, so that I am not able to look up." He is made sin for us; He is made a curse for us. Our iniquities separated between Him and His God, and our sins hid His face from Him. Behold and see, behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow!

Is it after this manner that we are to die with Christ? Not so. There are some who under the conviction of sin do go down into this valley of the shadow of death. For a time they feel helpless, hopeless, God-forsaken. For these it is everything that the Captain of their salvation has here also led the way; that He has not shunned the very heart of the gloom; that He has entered its blackness of darkness, and yet made His way again to the light. But He died thus that we might not in like manner die. He would have no member of His Body to go through His bitter experience, to be weighed down with guilt and filled with fear and agony. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Wherein, then, lies our fellowship of the sufferings of Christ? For we must have it. We must suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. We can drink of the cup He drank of, and be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized withal. We must be crucified with Him, for only if we be dead with Him shall we also live with Him; only if we suffer, shall we also reign with Him. "Christ hath suffered for us," not that we might not suffer, but "leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps."* "Forasmuch," says the Apostle, "as Christ

hath suffered for us, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."*

It is the "mind" in which Christ suffered wherewith we are to arm ourselves,—in having which stands our fellowship in those sufferings. That mind—but who shall sound its infinite depths? Who shall measure its length and depth and breadth and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge? Only as we are like Him can we feel with Him, only as we love can we know. But—that mind in which He suffered was the hatred and the sorrow for sin. "In that He died, He died unto sin once: likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin . . . in Jesus Christ our Lord." His sufferings were not only the measure of what God must inflict, but the measure of what God feels. The mind of God as regards sin is thus revealed to us that, knowing it, we might share it. His sorrow for the sin of the whole world is the type and pattern of the sorrow which should be ours for our own sin. And when thus we die with Him to sin, we bring forth the fruits of His Passion. The Father hath purposed to reward His Son for that which He this day endured. "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied." By giving ourselves entirely to Him who hath bought us with so great a price, by suffering Him to work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, we contribute so far as in us lies to that blessed end. For we are His seed; for us was wrought the travail of His soul. Thus far are we permitted to repay our Lord for what He hath done for us.

If on the other hand we fail to enter into this fellowship, we delay the fruition of His hope and the satisfaction of His travailing soul. Yea more, we can for ourselves (though, thanks be to God! not for the world) even defeat the end of His work. We can crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. Only of the members of Christ's Body could this be said;—of those who “were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.”* And of these only in their utter apostasy. Their daily failings and shortcomings are already atoned for. The blood which has once washed our whole being is ever being sprinkled in the Church, to cleanse our feet also from the defilements they gather in their pilgrimage through this sinful world. But every time that one of His own drops back into irredeemable apostasy, then—so far as He can now be touched with the feeling of our infirmities—once again comes across Him the grief, the shame, the horror of great darkness. How earnestly then should we strive for ourselves and for our brethren that no such renewal of shame and suffering may be His! Rather, as soul after soul emerges from darkness into light, may He have continual fore-tastes of that full fruition of joy which awaits Him, when the Church which He hath purchased with His blood shall be presented to Him a glorious Bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

Upon such thoughts let our hearts and spirits feed this day. Draw we near with solemn awe; come we into

* Heb. vi. 4—6.

the darkness which surrounds the Cross. Forgetting ourselves, look we only on the Spotless One who is hanging there. See His soul full of troubles, and His life drawing nigh unto the grave. See lover and friend put far from Him, and His acquaintance into darkness. See the Father's face vanishing from His gaze, and the hosts of the enemy gathering around, and the chill of desolation settling upon His heart. And then fall down each one of us before His Cross, and say—"It was my sins, O blessed Jesu, which nailed Thee to the tree: it was my guilt that weighed Thee down, and filled Thy soul with fear and agony. Give me such sympathy with Thee in Thy sorrow, that I too may abhor all evil. Grant that I may never crucify Thee afresh and put Thee to an open shame. Make me rather one of those blessed in whom Thou shalt see of the travail of Thy soul, and be satisfied."

Thou hast redeemed us from the curse
 With Thine own most precious blood.
 Nailed to the cross, pierced with the spear,
 Thou hast restored immortality to man.
 We celebrate Thee, who died for us;
 O our Saviour, glory be to Thee."

Jesus the Burden-bearer.

Gal. vi. 2.

"BEAR ye one another's burdens, *and so fulfil the law of Christ.*"

On other days in the year we contemplate the character and life of our Lord mainly as it is an example for our imitation. We seize its salient points and obvious features, and then pass readily on to dwell

upon the lesson they convey. But to-day the process must be reversed, if we are to enter into the spirit of our solemn celebration. Jesus our Lord Himself is the one object of our thoughts. In the presence of His Passion, at the foot of His Cross, we forget ourselves, and are lost in the emotions they kindle. Our contemplation to-day is an end in itself: we "behold and see" this one thing only—"if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow." And if there be modes and ways in which we can drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism, we should use them now not as guiding ourselves but as helping us to understand Him. That to bear one another's burdens is to fulfil the law of Christ may well at other times incite us to bear them the more readily. But now it comes to us with this one thought—that the bearing of 'others' burdens is a true aspect of the actings of Jesus; that what little we know of this among ourselves may justly go towards our apprehension of Him whom to know is life eternal, for He is the image of God.

By "the law of Christ" we do not understand any external rule of action. "Fulfil His law" does not mean "obey the precept He has given," or even "the commandments He Himself observed." The Apostle speaks rather of an inward principle of life and conduct, of the form taken by the ruling motives of the mind. Such and such, he says, was the law of Christ's being: fulfil it, make it the law of your own.

The law of Christ, then, was the bearing of others' burdens. We see it in the whole course of His life. He could not even heal the sick as one outside them: but when He did so, that was fulfilled which was spoken {by the prophet Esaias—"Himself took our

infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."* In all our afflictions He was afflicted. Even where He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, He felt and confessed the sin. He beheld Jerusalem in the flush of its glory, in all the pomp of the Paschal holytide; and He wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known . . . in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace: but now are they hid from thine eyes." But it is especially in the scenes on which we this day dwell—in the Garden and on the Cross—that we are led to see Him bearing our burdens. To this time belong especially those testimonies regarding Him which contain the same figure—"Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree" "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away" *lit.* that beareth "the sin of the world" "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

How do we read such words? Do we understand them of some mere fiction of imputation, known on both sides to be a fiction, and available to us only by another fiction as hollow? Do we think the cry, "my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" to have resulted from a mere show of hiding of face on the part of the Father, to have been therefore unreal in Him who felt and uttered it? Very different is the teaching of our services this day:—

"O Lord Jesu Christ, there was never sorrow like unto Thy sorrow, wherewith Thou wast afflicted in the day of the fierce anger of Almighty God. . . . But our sins were the cause of Thy sorrow, and our guilt weighed Thee down and filled Thy soul with fear and agony. . . . In all things Thou wast made like

* Matt. viii. 17.

unto us, that in Thy pure and unspotted heart Thou mightest have sympathy with us in our exceeding misery, that Thou mightest taste the bitterness of sin, endure its burden in Thy most holy spirit, and yield up Thyself to be overshadowed as with a horror of great darkness."

And again:—

"From the earth rose up the blackness of darkness, fit emblem of the heaviness which oppressed Thy spirit, O Jesu, beloved of the Father. . . . We meekly acknowledge, that our iniquities separated between Thee and Thy God, and our sins hid His face from Thee."

No fiction here, but the deepest reality. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all, not by merely imputing to Him the sin, but by identifying Him with the sinners. In all things He was made like unto His brethren, that He might have sympathy with them, might feel their sin His own, tasting its bitterness and enduring its burden. Is not a patriot humiliated if his country is disgraced, or a father if his son come to dis-honour? Realise these human analogies, and then use them as stepping-stones to arrive at the contemplation of His burden-bearing, on whom were laid the sins of the world. His perfect love made Him capable of this. We can only expand to the breadth of a family, or at the utmost a nation; but His heart contained all mankind. We can thus without the least violence hear Him taking up the language of the Psalms, not only when they say, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God," but also when their utterance is—"Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me." And therefore we can see how

the blackness of darkness which arose from the earth was a fit emblem of the heaviness which oppressed His soul, and wrung from Him the bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It was not that the sun in heaven ceased to shine, but that the shadow came between it and the land of Immanuel. It was not that the Father ever looked with anything but the most well-pleased love upon His incarnate Son: for—"He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, *neither hath He hid His face from him.*" But it was that our iniquities, felt as His own, separated between Him and His God; and our sins, taken to Himself, hid His face from Him. The sacrifices of God were here indeed a broken spirit: it was a broken and a contrite heart in Him which God did not despise.

Do we feel it hard to realise this? If so, let us love one another, as He loved us. In proportion as we do so, His actings will shine with clearer light. "We shall be like Him," says the Apostle, "for we shall see Him as He is:" the true vision implies the full conformity, for only thus is it possible. It is because our hearts are so cold, that to feel another's sin our own seems unreal. Love obliterates such distinctions. It makes us separate individuals no longer, but members of a body, where if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. When this is realised, it is easy to follow on, and say, "If all the members suffer, the Head, the Source and Ending and Meeting-point of all, must especially suffer." It was thus that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. And he who has truly borne, if it be but for a day, the burden of a brother's sin, has learnt more of the Atonement than all the books in the world could teach him.

And remember, that in all this Jesus Christ was revealing the Father. It is not the whole truth, though it is the truth, to say that the Father laid the burden, and the Son bore it.* He bore it, as representing man before God, but no less as revealing God towards man. "God commendeth *His* love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* "The sufferings of Christ" it has been well said "were not so much the measure of what God can inflict, as the revelation of what God feels." Our God is not like the deities of the heathen,—joyous, impassive, "careless of mankind." He feels the woe of His creature; though He looks beyond to see all things working together for good. Jesus, risen and glorified, reveals His happiness in man's recovery; and no less Jesus, bruised and agonizing, reveals His pity and sympathy in man's misery. He that saw Him saw the Father, on the Cross as in the Passover-chamber.† He feels sin with the heart of God, and He confesses it with the lips of man; and thus God and man are at one in Him, to become at one also in us.

With thoughts such as these let us draw near to-day into the shadow of the Cross, into the presence of the crucified One. He is so set forth to us, in our pathetic services, as to draw forth the deepest emotions of love and sympathy. We follow Him from Gethsemane to Calvary, from the bloody sweat to the cry of desolation; passing through the betrayal, the condemnation, the mocking and scourging, the weary journey to without the gate. As we tread this Way of the Cross, let our one thought be of Him who made it

* Rom. v. 8.

† John xiv. 9.

for ever hallowed. Bring together all we know of His person, of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was ; all we know of His character, so holy, harmless, and undefiled ; all we know of His atoning work, that He was bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. And out of this our knowledge let the adequate feeling arise. They who mocked Him there had not the knowledge : else they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. His mother and His beloved disciple, and the faithful women with them, who alone remained beside His cross, had not the knowledge we have. None other then gave Him love and pity, who was full of love and pity for all. But now surely He may see of the travail of His soul. Among the millions who this day wait before His Cross, and adore Him who was crucified, He sees His seed. Be we of the number, in the reality of our emotion, in the depth of our contrition. But that we may so be, forget we ourselves, and look only on Him. Before our eyes this day Jesus Christ is evidently set forth, crucified, among us. The preacher has but to direct all eyes to the amazing sight : and then—the fewer words the better.

“Behold, we wait before Thy Cross ; we adore Thee, O Thou that wast crucified. Draw us unto Thee, conform us to Thine example, and now and henceforth let us take up our cross and follow Thee in this world, looking for our reward in the regeneration, in the kingdom of Thy glory. Amen.”

EASTER EVE.

“He descended into Hell.”

THERE are no holy days, save the very greatest, for which such ample provision is made in our Prayer Book as for this Holy Saturday. Let us briefly consider the teaching of its services.

I. First of all we have a summary statement of the doctrine of that which we commemorate, in the Greek anthem appointed for Forenoon prayer:—

“Thou wast present as on this day, O Christ, with Thy body in the tomb; with Thy soul Thou wast in Hades, fulfilling to the thief Thy promise that he should be with Thee in paradise; and on the throne Thou wast abiding with the Father and the Holy Ghost, filling all things, and uncircumscribed of any.”

The eternal Son had taken manhood into God. That manhood was perfect,—of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. While He lived, soul and flesh remained united; when He died, they became separate,—the body laid in the tomb, the soul going to Hades, the invisible, the place of the departed. But He, the eternal Son, was with His separated as with His united manhood, with His flesh in the tomb as with His soul in Hades, for He had taken both into indissoluble union with Himself. At the same time He now, as during His life on earth, abode in the integrity of His Divine Nature with the Father and with the

Holy Ghost, manifested in glory in heaven, and also present everywhere and filling all things. This is a great mystery; but it is no less a certain fact, and we do well to state it with our lips while we bow our heads and adore.

II. Secondly, we are taught certain truths as to the condition in which our Lord's body rested in the tomb and His soul tarried in Hades.

1. Of His body we learn from those words of the sixteenth Psalm which we are taught by St. Peter to understand of Him:—"My flesh also shall rest in hope: for Thou wilt not . . . suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Corruption is that resolution of the body into its component parts, that return of dust to dust, which ensues upon its ceasing to live. Unless prevented by the power of God, this change would have begun in the body of Jesus, as in those of other men, almost immediately upon death. We are assured, however, that His flesh, preserved by that power, experienced no such change. And so it rested in hope. The hope was not in the flesh, but in Him who was with His flesh, who, feeling His Father's operation in it in the very darkness of the tomb, knew that He was being treated thereby as His Holy One, and kept in safety till the hour when He should be shewn the path of life, and brought back to His presence where is fulness of joy, and to His right hand where are pleasures for evermore.

2. Of our Lord's consciousness in His human spirit while this was separate from the body, we have several intimations. That it was "Paradise" to which He went, —whereto He would welcome the penitent thief, not when He came in His kingdom, but on the very day of His death *—this shews that it was to the happy side of

* Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

the great gulf* that His steps were directed. That it was in joy and felicity that His spirit abode appears from the same sixteenth Psalm. "My heart is glad, my glory" i.e. my soul "rejoiceth"—so He sang. But observe the reason why:—"For Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades." It was not because Hades was a delightsome place, but—on the contrary—because of the sure hope of emerging from it.

There is therefore another side to the condition of spirit in which our Lord abode in the invisible. It is that expressed by St. Peter, when he says, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the *pains of death*."† Death—the state in which soul is separate from body—has its, "pains," its restraints. The human soul in its creation was inspired into a body, and only in a body can live its perfect life. Without it it is homeless and naked‡: it is incapable of its full enjoyment and its consummate work. Accordingly we use to express the mind of Christ at this time the prayer of Jonah in the whale's belly, and the lament of the Psalmist when exiled from the city of God and His temple, and his cry *de profundis*.§ Jesus too felt the earth with her bars about Him: He was in the night, though in that night the Lord's song was with Him: His soul waited for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.

And if He felt thus while in Hades, can we doubt that His people have like experience there? That the spirits of those who sleep in Him do abide in joy and felicity, we are sure. But their joy, their felicity cannot be greater than His were; and as in Him these emotions

* Luke xvi. 26.

† Acts ii. 24.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 1-5.

§ Ps. cxxx.

were consistent with the sense of restraint and the longing for resurrection, so must it be with them. Hades is indeed Paradise to them, a garden of sweet repose: it is more so than ever since He entered there, and death's darkness has been made beautiful with Him. But they desire something better still, even to be clothed with their changed garments, to inhabit their house from heaven, and therein to work for God. And so from out of their hallowed rest we hear them with the ear of faith joining in the Church's "Come, Lord Jesu!": we know that in them as in the living there is

"One weary heart, one never-silent cry,—
 'O Lord, how long' or ere the hour be nigh,
 When Thou from heaven to earth again shalt come,
 To take Thy Bride to her eternal home?'"

III. Thirdly, the services of this day teach us what was our Lord's occupation during the interval between His death and resurrection.

His occupation, we say; and herein speak of His spirit, not of His body. His body as yet belonged to the old creation, and kept on this Holy Saturday its sabbath of rest. But His spirit had entered upon the life of the new creation, which knows no weariness and needs no repose. And, "put to death in flesh, but quickened in spirit," He went therein, says St. Peter in to-day's epistle, and "preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."* He found in the invisible world to which His spirit departed a company of spirits of those who once were alive in the days of Noah. They were disobedient to the word of that preacher

of righteousness while the ark was being prepared, and so failed of salvation therein from the impending Deluge. But they repented (it would seem) of their sins ere yet the water's whelmed them, and so though exposed to temporal judgment, escaped the being hurt of the second death. They remained in ward until the spirit of Jesus brightened their place of keeping, and then He preached to them the good tidings of God.

So far we have actual revelation to guide us. But devout imagining cannot be forbidden to take up the theme, and follow the footsteps of His spirit in the shadowy land. If to these He brought by personal communication such blessed news, can we think that He left others unvisited? Would He not gladden the hearts of the patriarchs and saints of old, of the prophets and kings who desired to see and hear the things of Him? We do not suppose, with many of old, that He took them with Him into heaven at His Ascension. But we do trust that He prepared them in heart and mind thither to ascend, and with Him continually to dwell, even as He enables us so to do; and by the same Holy Spirit. And whatever He manifested to them while with them, He gloriously confirmed by tearing Himself from death's hitherto unconquerable grasp.

“ When Thou hadst humbled Thyself to death,—
Jesu, Thou Life immortal,
With the glory of Thy Godhead
Thou didst shine into the obscure,
Thou didst preach unto the spirits in prison,
And smotest hell with deadly wound,
Thou didst spoil principalities and powers,
And show Thyself triumphant over them.
When Thou didst lead captivity captive,
The hosts of heaven saw Thee and adored.
O Christ our God, Giver of Life:
Glory be to Thee.”

So we sing this morning. The coming resurrection will cast its brightness before, and awake even now the strain of praise. But the general character of to-day's services is one of saddened stillness. The altar remains undecked: no lights are kindled, and no incense burnt. The Sacrifice has been offered, but the Victim lies dead; and we rejoice not yet. But to-morrow—"very early in the morning, as it begins to dawn to the first day of the week"—we mourners shall come, not to the tomb of a dead, but to the house of a risen Christ, and shall say one to another, "The Lord is risen indeed. Hallelujah." Then shall we rejoice in a Sacrifice accepted, a Saviour triumphant, and ourselves made partakers in His victory.

EASTER DAY.

“The Lord is risen indeed.”

Most of us have known what it is to stand by the grave of a dead hope, and to feel that all joy in life is buried there for ever. Who could have felt this more keenly than the disciples and the faithful women, as they looked upon the place where Jesus lay? They had hoped that this was he who should have redeemed Israel; but now all had seemed to end in failure. It was but the old story: the lover of men martyred by those he came to bless; the earnest heart grappling with our sorrows and perplexities, and breaking in the task. There was nothing to be done but to pay the last honours to his ashes, and then to return to their homes with another hero to worship, another teacher to learn from, keeping his memory sacred and tender, and walking as best they might in the steps of his example.

So would it have been if Christ had not risen from that grave of His; and so much and no more will then have of Him now. To believe in His resurrection is to acknowledge a miracle: and science, intruding where it should not, is daily finding miracles more and more incredible. The leaders of modern thought will admit our Christ into their Pantheon of sages and philanthropists. They will mourn with us over His rejection and martyrdom. But there they stop. We say “The

Lord is risen indeed;" but they respond with no Hallelujah. The fact finds no place in their systems, and answers to none of their plans and expectations. They will take such of the things of Christ as they find useful. But that He should have been raised from the dead to be Lord over all things and Head of His Body the Church is beyond the range of their thoughts. They are not careful to controvert it: they simply disregard and ignore it.

Truly it is only the kingdom of heaven which is joy in the Holy Ghost. Philosophy is still weeping over the tomb of her dead Socrates; but Christianity has from the beginning rejoiced in a risen Christ. The difference is immeasurable. An atheist might take the one place: but the other speaks plainly of a living God, a God who has the power and the will to save, a God who will not suffer the highest good to be extinguished, a God in whom there is hope for mankind. "Thou didst not leave His soul in hell, neither didst Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." No praise can be more joyous than this, no message more truly one of good tidings. The gospel which St. Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, and which the Church has ever been preaching since, is just this, that God hath raised up Jesus. It is not the "miracle" that we care for,—nor that God has brought a man to life again; but it is that He hath raised up *Jesus*. It is that He would not allow death, who conquers all others, to prevail over this most precious thing; but plucked it from his grasp, and gave it back to us for our joy and blessing. It is that He absolves the Confessor of our sins; for if their guilt slew Him, nothing short of their forgiveness could have brought Him again to life. It is that He accepts the Sacrifice offered on our behalf;

and fills the Priest's hands with blessings for the worshippers. If the resurrection of Jesus be a truth, then God has spoken unmistakeably; and the word He has spoken has been "peace."

Let us praise Him, therefore; and not with our lips only, but in our lives,—in the lives, that is, that we live unto Him. If Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins. But since He is raised, and our faith is not vain, why are we, why need we be, yet in our sins? "In that He died, He died unto sin once: in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord." "Ye are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God." "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the Christian standing. And if Christ be truly living in us, He will live His own life there,—life of believing, life of hoping, life of loving. O let it be so! Let men behold Christ risen indeed in the new life lived by His Church. Let the angels of God look into our eyes, and start to see whose soul it is that is shining through them,—shining with the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

He is not dead: He is risen."

A POET of our own day has sadly sung that "Christ is dead." He was alive once, when His name swept through the world, a resistless power: when Jew and Greek, Roman and Barbarian in turn felt His influence and bowed beneath His yoke. "He lived while we

believed." But that mighty wave of emotion has ebbed, and now—

"Now he is dead. Far hence he lies
In the torn Syrian town,
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down."

So speaks the mournful unbelief of this age. Faith has become chilled, and hope has grown weary on her watch-tower. The Church bears little witness to the living Christ, whose name is named upon her. Men are beginning to look elsewhere for the brotherhood, for the worship, for the joy which she in the power of that Name was intended to bring. Christ is dead, they say; he can help us no farther.

In keeping our Easter festival we profess a faith in the very teeth of this doubt. If Christ be not raised, our faith is indeed vain, and we are yet in our sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and seated at the right hand of God. In Him is life, and light, and hope, and joy. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is present now by His Spirit to save and to bless. He is coming again in person to raise His sleeping ones, and to dwell with them and with us for ever.

This is our faith; and in it believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But can we not bear a more effectual witness of it to the world? Whatever the Church was set to do, we ought to be able to do most perfectly. For this end God has restored His ordinances, that in the reviving Body of Christ the witness to the Head may be seen.

And first, if Christ be truly alive, He must be seen living in us, who claim to be members of His Body. What is the life we are living? Is it one of worldly

Easter Day. *

pleasure or of worldly ambition? Are our days a round of petty cares and ephemeral interests, innocent only in that they are free from the grosser sins? Or are we content if we emulate the heathen virtues, if we are just and upright, imbued with a strong sense of duty, unblameable in our domestic and social relations? Christ need not have risen if this were all that God desired in His children. He rose to bring to man a new life, higher than anything that had been seen before:—the life of patience and meekness, the life of mercy and forgiveness, the life of love and sacrifice. Let men see such a life as this, with all its fruit of active helpfulness. Let them see it lived under no constraint of external law, with no attraction of future reward, but because the fountain within is ever bubbling, the fire within ever burning. Let them see it not in one here and there, but in every one of us—young men and maidens, old men and children—each according to his measure. And then let them hear from one and all the ascription—“Yes, we live: nevertheless not we, but *Christ liveth in us*;” and a witness will have been borne which not many will be able to resist.

There is but one mightier, but one more convincing testimony that we can bear: and we trust that we shall bear it soon. The power of His life within us must wax ever stronger and stronger, till at last its fleshly tabernacle shall feel its influence, “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in us.” The man-child shall be born: the sons of God manifested. Then will the honest doubt depart, and the evil heart of unbelief be without excuse, when the risen Body stands forth to testify of its risen Head. *

For ourselves,—if the world must wait for physical demonstration, we will rejoice already in the assurance of faith. It is a thing to be thankful for every day that God has vouchsafed to this dim world of ours so lovely a vision as that of Jesus Christ. But our gratitude swells, and our trust deepens, when we believe that this most precious thing that earth has seen has not been allowed to moulder in the dust. What blessed assurance as to our own dear dead, that we shall see each other face to face once more. No guess now of philosophy, no dream engendered of strong desire; but certain hope. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then also them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

O blessed Easter! We can wish for no better happiness than that our hearts shall be filled with its joy.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Faith in Christ Risen.

1 John v. 4-12. John xx. 19-29.

IT would seem from the gospel appointed for to-day as though the Church could not leave those wonderful Easter hours, to which she looks back as the birthtime of her life and joy. The narrative of St. John, which was commenced on Easter Day, does not go on immediately upon this first Sunday after Easter to the events of the corresponding eighth day after the resurrection. It lingers rather upon the events of that day itself. The angel has rolled away the stone, and He who was dead is alive again, and is risen and gone. The women have found the sepulchre empty; and Peter and John have confirmed their report. The two who walked to Emmaus have companied with their risen Lord, and have known Him when revealed in the breaking of bread. Before they have returned to Jerusalem with the joyful news, the Lord has appeared unto Simon Peter. And now, in the evening of the day, we see the risen One coming into the midst of the eleven. We hear Him speaking peace, and pointing to the wounds which have made it: * we see Him breathing on His disciples, and expressing the meaning

of His act by the words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." We, like Thomas called Didymus, were not with them when Jesus came. But, receiving the witness of the men who have borne record of it, and also the witness of God by the Spirit, which is greater, we wait not to put our finger into the print of the nails, or to thrust our hand into His side. We inherit the blessing of them who have not seen, and yet have believed: by faith, and not by sight, we cry "My Lord and my God."

The blessedness of so believing is further expressed by the Apostle Paul. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." It is not enough to believe that men have put Him to death, even though it be by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. That would but prove that the guilt of our sin was so heinous, that the very Son of God, if He take our flesh, must take with it the wages of sin, which is death. It would prove the guilt; it would kindle remorse for it; but it would not bring repentance. Only the goodness of God can do this. And the goodness of God is not seen in giving His Son to die for us, until the "for us" is made manifest by His rising again. If Christ be not raised, even though He have died, our faith is vain; we are yet in our sins. But if we believe in our heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, then indeed are we saved. We have seen Him fall lifeless under the burden of our guilt: but now to behold Him quickened again—what can it mean but that the burden is lifted, the guilt expiated, the sin forgiven? It is the risen One who speaks peace. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, *yea rather, that is risen again.*" Dying, He makes peace; but risen,

He comes and preaches it.* His death embodies the confession of our sin, His resurrection its absolution; and fitly upon the absolution follows the "peace." "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Truly it is a victory which overcometh the world—this faith of ours. The world witnesses to no forgiveness of sins, but rather to the inevitable consequence of every misdeed. The world knows only death, and its hopeless gaze sees no vision of resurrection. To it Christ is but another Socrates, illustrating the wickedness of man by His martyrdom, but exhibiting no power and mercy of God in raising Him again. Our faith overcomes this opposition of sense and experience. Standing this day in the fellowship of the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, we do believe in our hearts that God hath raised Him from the dead, and sent Him to bless us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities. We hear His voice now as plainly as they heard it then, saying, "Peace be unto you": we feel His breath warm upon us through the ages, as from Him we still receive the Holy Ghost. Blessed indeed is such faith, effectual for peace, and strong for victory. Let us thank God who has given it us; and seek that it may so work by love as to bring forth in us fitting fruit—the love of Christ constraining us, who died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who for them died and rose again.

Christ risen for our justification.

Rom. iv. 23-25.

"To us also" faith shall be counted for righteousness, "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

We learn from this scripture that the faith we need, that to us as to Abraham it may be imputed for righteousness, is the belief on Him who hath raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, whose resurrection indeed was for the very object of our justification.

It might seem more natural to connect justification with our Lord's death than with His resurrection. Yet this is not the only passage in Holy Scripture wherein Christ risen is set forth as the special object of justifying faith. Thus for instance we read—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart *that God hath raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."* And again—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, *yea, rather, that is risen again.*"† Nor is it difficult to see that it must be so. The death of Christ was indeed the purchase-money of our redemption and the sacrifice of full propitiation. But only in God's raising Him from the dead have we the evidence that the sacrifice has been accepted and the ransom counted sufficient. To believe in Christ's death alone without His resurrection is to hear a confession

* Rom. x. 9.

† Ibid. viii. 33, 34.

made without absolution following, and would lead to condemnation rather than justification. If Christ be not raised, our faith is vain: we are yet in our sins.

We are as a rebellious people, who desire to ~~make~~ our peace with our justly-offended sovereign. The king's own son has undertaken to be our representative, to plead our cause and seek our pardon. Standing trembling and afar off, we watch him as he approaches the throne. We see him, oppressed with the burden of our guilt, fall prostrate at its foot. But while we wait in suspense, lo! he rises with joyful countenance, and advances towards us. Though too distant to hear what was spoken, it is plain what its tenor has been. And our assurance is confirmed when his first words to us on returning are "Peace be unto you."*

So has it been with the Lord Jesus, the Son of the most high God. The message of the Gospel just brings this scene before us; and assures us of forgiveness by declaring His resurrection, at the same time that it convinces us of sin by exhibiting His death. To be so convinced and so assured is the Christian standing. That which in Him was once for all in us is an abiding attitude, a pervading character. We always bear about in us the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in us. Every time we make confession of sin we die in His death: every time we receive its absolution we rise again in His resurrection. But that He has risen is the pledge that our confession is already accepted before we make it; that the sting of such death is drawn; that there is no place now for the suspense of doubt and the seeming hiding of God's countenance. Till our Representative had risen par-

* John xx. 19.

† Rom. vi. 10.

doned, we might indeed have stood afar off, or approached only in fear and trembling. But now we rush forward, a joyful multitude, to follow Him to the foot of the throne, to make our submission in the knowledge of amnesty already declared, and never (as we trust) to shame Him * by rebelling more.

It is plain, therefore, that the faith which is imputed to us for righteousness, the faith which delivers from the conscience of sin which is by the law, must be above all things the belief in God's raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

But now, withdrawing our gaze from the object of faith, let us consider faith itself, as that in man, which enables God, for Christ's sake to justify him, † and which He counts for righteousness. If man will deal with God on the basis of law, and seek to receive from Him by way of debt, he must produce a perfect obedience. Then he might be justified by the works of the law. But if, seeing the failure of all such attempts, he casts himself upon God's mercy,—then to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

What then is this faith, which the grace of God can accept in place of the works of the law as a ground of righteousness in His sight? It is simply an act (or series of acts) of genuine, hearty belief and trust,—belief towards God in one or other of His revelations of Himself. Abraham simply believed God in His promise concerning his seed and its inheritance. Yet that faith was counted to him for righteousness; and his justification is set forth as the type and pattern of.

ours, who believe on Him that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. The object of faith varies at different times, according to the degree in which God has unfolded Himself to the believer. But so long as the faith rises to the level of the revelation, it is the same faith; and in all ages alike it is counted for righteousness.

But now a step farther. How is it that God counts faith for righteousness? Is it a mere arbitrary appointment of His sovereignty, inscrutable to man? Or is there something in the nature of faith, which makes it a fitting exercise of His grace to justify the sinner on the strength of it? We shall be greatly helped in our reply to these questions by a somewhat neglected portion of Holy Scripture,—the teaching on the subject of justification by St. James. Our Protestant brethren are not very happy about this sacred writer. Luther indeed would have rejected him from the canon of Scripture, calling his work an epistle of chaff instead of wheat. His followers think they can reconcile him with St. Paul; but, having done so to their best, they willingly leave him alone, and dwell on the other's teaching exclusively. Whereas the two are really complementary the one to the other; and St. James supplies that which St. Paul sometimes leaves unsaid. Let us hear him speak.

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, ‘Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy

faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.' Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise, also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."*

It is evident from this scripture that the faith which justifies—the faith which in Abraham was counted for righteousness—is itself a capacity for good works, a source and germ of righteous acting. It lives in works, and without these is dead. Being such, we may well understand how God should count it for righteousness. Still less is it strange that He should so do, when in the Son of His love He beholds the source already swelled to the full river, the germ grown to flower and fruit. His grace accepts us in the beloved One, because in our faith He sees the beginning of conformity to His image. As He has accepted Christ as the pledge for all who should come to the Father by Him, so He accepts our faith as the pledge of our progress in that way upon which through faith we have entered. He

counts it for righteousness full and entire, because it is the capacity for this, which no actual obedience can be.

Is not this the account given of faith by every writer of Holy Scripture, and not by St. James only? St. Paul says that that which in Christ Jesus availeth, where neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails, is faith which worketh by love.* He seeks to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. But this is in order that he "may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."† Nor is the writer to the Hebrews, whether he be Paul or another, less explicit. "The just shall live by faith": but what faith? That by which the elders obtained a good report: by which Abel offered the better sacrifice, Enoch walked with God and pleased God, Noah built the ark which saved him, Abraham left his own country for the land of promise, Sarah brought forth Isaac and Abraham was ready to sacrifice him; by which Isaac himself, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and all the patriarchs and prophets and holy men of old wrought righteousness before God. This, he says, is how to "believe to the saving of the soul" And St. John just echoes him when he calls our faith the victory which overcometh the world.‡

So God counts faith for righteousness, because it is the stock from which righteousness ever grows. And if it was so of old, how much more now, when Christ has died and risen, and the Comforter has come. To believe in Christ necessarily leads on to be baptized into Him; §

* Gen. i. v. 6.

† Phil. iii. 9-11.

‡ 1 John v. 4, 5.

§ Acts xvi. 31-33.

and to be baptized into Christ means to be buried with Him in His death, and to be raised with Him in newness of life: * it means to be dead to sin and alive to God. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; † the one so leads on to the other that it is counted as its accomplishment. And to be born of God means to be His sons and daughters, and this means to be like Him; ‡ and to be imitators of Him as dear children. § This is righteousness indeed; exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and proper to the kingdom of heaven.

But throughout the whole progress of the Christian life, though faith is ever bringing forth her fruit of good works unto God, yet it is still by the faith that we are justified, and not by the works. Christ *in* us is the hope of glory; but that hope would be vain were there not a Christ *for* us. And while our good works are the measure of the growing Christ in us, our faith ever lays hold of the perfect Christ *for* us. Alps upon Alps arise as we climb the mountain of God's holiness;—the horizon widens, the distance spreads. Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God: yet at no time do we count ourselves to have attained, or to be already perfect. The nearer we approach the light of God, the plainer our dark places become. The higher we rise in the life of Christ, the deeper our humility, the more sincere our confession of sinfulness. And if, while yet the Lord delays His coming, any of us close his eyes in death, the holiest saint feels no

* Col. ii. 12.

† 1 John v. 1.

‡ Matt. v. 44, 45.

§ Eph. v. 1.

reliance upon himself, even though by the grace of God he is what he is.

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Only to Thy Cross I cling”

is as truly his word then as when first at the foot of that cross the burden of his guilt rolled off from his shoulders. In that last hour when flesh and heart do fail, there is no rest for the departing spirit but in the vision of the Christ for us,—the Christ that died, that is risen again, that is at the right hand of God, that makes intercession for us.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Shepherd and His Fold. .

1 Pet. ii. 19-25. John x. 11-16.

“WHERE is He,” cries Isaiah, “that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of His flock?” He speaks of Moses, and of what happened after the first passover. But now Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, and the Apostle writes of “the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the *great Shepherd* of the sheep.” And to-day’s epistle says, “Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” To Him, that is, who is Shepherd and Bishop, not who was so once. He was truly Shepherd when He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and especially when He laid down His life for the sheep. But He is no less Shepherd now. Brought from the dead as such, as such He *blesses* us from the right hand of God. And down one of the farthest vistas given us into the future we see Him still with the crook in His hand—“The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”

We were as sheep going astray, but have now returned unto this Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. We are those of whom He speaks in the gospel,—“And other sheep I have, which are not of ~~this~~ fold”

—the fold of Israel: “them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd.” That we are so brought everything in the Church testifies. There is the table prepared before us, and upon it the sacred feast which is as the green pastures and the still waters to the sheep of the plain. There from lectern and pulpit His word is a rod and a staff to comfort us. There by the hands of His Apostles He anointeth our head with oil, and filleth us with His Holy Spirit, so that our cup runneth over. There by the continual worship of His sanctuary goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life, and we dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

That we are in the *fold* of the good Shepherd there can be no doubt. But are we also of His *flock*? That is a question for each one of us to ask himself; and nothing that is outward will answer it. Are we those of whom He says—“I know my sheep, *and am known of mine*, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father”? and again—“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”? This it is to be of His flock, and not merely within His fold. Let us all examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith; and prove our own selves.

Only be sure of this, that none but those who are truly of the flock know the full riches of the blessings of the fold. Services and sacraments, teachings and meetings for the exercise of gifts, observances of holy seasons, intercourse with ministers,—all these privileges are to us according as we come to them. If they are “a weariness to the flesh,” it may be because the flesh only is present with us on the occasion. When it is

so, then the veil of earthly things under which we should have communion with our Lord becomes, not a transparent gauze, but a solid obstruction. Let it not be so with us. Let us "follow on to know the Lord," to be indeed the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Then at that table of His in the wilderness, we shall *taste* that He is gracious: in the ministrations of His servants we shall feel in our hearts that the Lord is our Shepherd: we shall indeed with the spiritual ear hear His voice, and by the constraint of love shall follow Him whithersoever He goeth. We shall know Him, as He knoweth the Father. In such knowledge standeth our eternal life, laying hold of which we shall never perish, neither shall anyone, man or devil, pluck us out of His hand. The outlines of His earthly fold shall melt, as in a dissolving view, into those of His heavenly city, to be citizens of which is indeed to dwell in the House of the Lord for ever.

The Clothing upon with the house from heaven.

2 Cor. v. 1-5.

LET us see how the Apostle had been led into the train of thought he here expresses?

He had been speaking (ch. iii.) of the ministry committed to him and his fellow-workers. The thought of its glory suggests by way of contrast the weakness of its instruments. God has kindled His lamp in our hearts, he says (ch. iv.), that we may diffuse ~~the~~ light

abroad. But they are earthen vessels who contain the heavenly treasure. The dying of the Lord Jesus is ever going on in our bodies, while His life is being manifested in our spirits. But we know that He who raised up Jesus from His death will raise us from ours; and therefore we faint not, though our outward man perishes, since the inward man is renewed day by day. The one belongs to the visible, which is temporary—only for a season; the other is part and parcel of the invisible and eternal. And now he further justifies his confidence. He is assured that this inward man has an outward man suited to it,—eternal and heavenly as it is. If the “alway being delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake” should result in actual martyrdom, if the daily wasting away of the mortal body should culminate in dissolution, he knows that there is another habitation for his spirit to dwell in, another vesture to robe it withal, so that being clothed it shall not be found naked.

The Apostle uses two images whereby to describe the relation of the body of man to his spirit.

1. The first is that of a *dwelling-place*. Israel, when journeying through the wilderness, had dwelt in tents, or tabernacles. God Himself, in setting up a place among them to put His name there, had made it but a tent among tents—the tabernacle. But when they came into their inheritance, and built ceiled houses for themselves to dwell in, it was not meet that the glory of the Lord should dwell between curtains. The tabernacle passed away; and the established, enduring temple took its place. So, says St. Paul—“We know that if this tent-dwelling of ours be dissolved, we have a *building* of God, a house eternal.” Our present body is not our permanent home. It is but a tent of the desert,

to-day pitched, and to-morrow struck. It belongs to the natural, and we are of the spiritual. It is earthly, and our calling is to be heavenly. It cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And therefore we, who are heirs of that kingdom, in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. We earnestly desire its change into that building which God has prepared for it, which shall be eternal because fitted to its eternal inhabitant, spiritual as it is spiritual, heavenly as it is heavenly. We desire that the mortality of our present body may be swallowed up of, absorbed in, life. For this God has wrought us; and in giving us of His Spirit, He gives us of this very thing an earnest,—a first fruits and a pledge. Regeneration is resurrection begun in the spirit; and resurrection is regeneration completed in the body. “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”*

The body which shall be our spirit’s future home is “eternal,” as being immortal and incorruptible. It is further characterized as “a house not made with hands.” The force of this expression is explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews. “Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, *not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building,*”† or rather, of this creation. “Made with hands” means—of this order of things, belonging to this earthly, temporary condition: “not made with hands” implies a standing among the good things to come, the unseen things which are eternal. It is a house not fashioned with bricks and mortar, as human

hands would rear it; but a Divine structure, our dwelling in that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Once more:—our house that is to be is described as now “in the heavens,” when we receive it we are said to receive it “from heaven.” What does this mean? Not, surely, that the substance of the resurrection body is now locally in heaven, and shall come locally therefrom. If it could be so for those that sleep, it could not be for those who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord. The new body for them at least is the former one changed, * not another substituted for it. And the Apostle earnestly desires, as we shall see, that with the house from heaven he may be clothed upon without being first disrobed of his earthly tabernacle. The clue to his meaning is just the phrase “earthly” applied to the body we now have. It is made of the dust of the ground, and imbued with the animal life. But in our renewed spirits we are already seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, seeking the things which are above where He sitteth at the right hand of God, and mortifying our members which are yet upon the earth.† This new heart which has been put in us is surely from heaven. From heaven also, then, is the new body in which that heart shall one day beat aright, and send through every vein the very life of God. All that makes it new, all that constitutes it immortal, incorruptible, tireless, spiritual, is from heaven;—is now hid there with Christ in God, and shall come from thence when He, our life, shall appear, and we also shall appear with Him in glory. “He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His

* Phil. iii. 20, 21.

† Col iii.

glorious body." That body of His is heavenly after a like manner. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is of heaven."* It is the *body* of the second Adam as of the first which is contemplated, in which the contrast lies. The first of dust, and to dust returning; the second quickened from death by the power of an endless life, raised up by the glory of the Father, made for Him a house indeed from heaven. He was made flesh, and *tabernacled* among us. But now the *temple* of His body has been builded up,† and He abides therein for ever. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. We know that we too have a building of God, an 'house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

2. The second image used in this scripture to express the relation of man's body to his spirit is that of a *vesture*. It is linked on to the first. "Earnestly desiring to be *clothed* upon with our *house* which is from heaven, if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." Without a body, it is implied, the human spirit would be not houseless merely, but naked. And this it is far from desiring. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon" is the burden of its groaning. Its only consolation, should its present house perish, is the hope of another more enduring: and if it must for a time remain "bare of the body," its longing is to be clothed again. It has laid aside its garments since it has fallen on sleep; but it must resume them when the morning appears, and the work of the day begins anew for it in the light of God.

The image is a familiar one with St. Paul. When he

writes—"Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man"—he is using it; and again when he says, to the Galatians—"As many as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ."* That earnest of the Spirit which we have already is thus as a garment of God in whose fair beauty our inward being is wrapped; and a garment which does not cover only, but is operative. It clings to us like the poisoned shirt of the fable, and sends its influence into our very bones: only it is not poison, but balm, which it infuses. And hence appears the force of the phrase—"clothed upon with our house from heaven." The word signifies the putting of one garment over another, as a cloak over a coat. It has reference to the change which shall pass, upon those who are alive and remain. As they have put on the new man in their spirits, so shall they then put it on in their bodies. "This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality"†—not to hide corruption, but to transform it, "that mortality should be swallowed up of life."

The image of the vesture is not followed out by the Apostle, as is that of the dwelling place. Had he wished to characterize it, he would doubtless have spoken of the one as of the other. The beautiful garment to be put on at the morning of the resurrection will be of Divine handiwork, of heavenly texture, of lasting material. It is that "fine linen clean and bright"—clean because washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, bright because shining with the pure light of heaven—"which is the righteousness of saints." "They shall walk with me in white, for they are

* Col. iii. 9-11. ; Gal. iii. 27, 28.

† 1 Cor. xv. 53.

worthy."* It is the likeness of Christ's body of glory passing upon the sackcloth of this body of humiliation, clothing the Christ in us with the Christ about us, making us appear with Him in glory, manifesting the sons of God.† "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is,"‡

We have suffered the words of the Apostle to grow one by one upon our view. We have put no constraint upon them, or endeavoured to bend them into accordance with preconceived notions. But now consider how weighty are the inferences and conclusions we must draw, regarding him as we do as an authentic expositor of the mind of Christ, of the truth of God.

1. Observe how unhesitatingly St. Paul assumes that the personality of man—the "I"—belongs to his spirit and not to his body. The body is our house, our garment: it is not ourself. We may put it off, or change it; but we remain. We may be naked without it, but though naked we exist. Such an assumption assuredly contradicts no instinct of our nature; and it underlies our hope of immortality. If we are nothing more than living bodies,—if thought and conscience and love and joy are but functions of our animal life as breathing is, then death indeed ends all. That the dust returns to the earth as it was is obvious to sense; and unless there be a spirit to return to God who gave it, we have ceased to be. God is no longer our God, for He is the God not of the dead but of the

living.* And therefore we cannot listen to any whispers of science which suggest that we are but brutes of a loftier growth, descendants without creative interference of the ape and the tiger. To be this implies that we are of "the beasts *that perish*," and something better than science protests against such a conclusion.

2. But, secondly; while the Apostle makes no doubt that he personally is distinct from his body, and may exist without it, he yet knows nothing of the idea that the body is no part of the integrity of his being. Apart from it, he contemplates the soul as houseless and naked. In this tabernacle indeed he groans and is burdened, but only because it is an earthly tabernacle, and not the house from heaven. He wishes to exchange the hovel for a palace, not to become a houseless wanderer. In this matter his opponents are not the men of science, but too many of those who profess and call themselves Christians. What is the hope commonly set before the Church by its teachers? what is the "heaven" to which they point? It is the condition into which the blessed pass at death. They are supposed then to join the Church triumphant, to reign with Christ in bliss, to behold the face of God. The body was useful for life on this earth during the state of probation: but it is entirely unnecessary, it would be a hindrance, in the heavenly existence. So death is welcomed as the emancipation of the soul, and regarded as the gate of heaven and the portal of immortality. Released from the body, we have become angels; and now our true life begins.

This is the popular conception; but it is at utter variance with the testimony of Scripture and the faith of

* Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

the Church. What we say we "look for" is "the resurrection of the dead," and then "the life of the world to come." From the Scripture we learn that "the spirit of man was in his creation inspired into a material body. And the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the proof that this is the eternal law of man's being, that his perfection can only be attained in the body. It was not enough that Christ's spirit should live after His body had expired. It did live, but as one holden of the pains (*i.e.*, the restraints) of death,* and longing for their loosing; as one whose rejoicing was just this, that God would not leave it in Hades, but would shew it the path of life. If the body be a useless incumbrance, why was He so anxious to take it again?

It is well for our desires that they be conformed to His. Let us be sure that the life of the world to come is to be lived in the body, as is the life of this world. In a spiritual body indeed, and not an animal one; but in a body. The senses will still be the gateways of knowledge; the hands will still work the works of God, and the feet carry us in the way of His commandments. This glorious universe around us, which we only know through our bodies, will still be the subject of our study. However quickened our apprehensions, whatever sights and sounds may then come to us which, while

"this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in,"

we cannot perceive, yet the law of our perceptions will be the same as that which God gave at the beginning. Not to be changed into angels, but to be lifted into true manhood, is our hope for the future.

3. And therefore (in the third place) the Apostle sets before himself change without seeing death as the object of his earnest desire. He is not content only to be clothed again, after a time of nakedness: he seeks not to be unclothed at all, but clothed over with his house from heaven. He would not thus have desired, had he not known the realisation of his wish to be possible. He knew that not all should sleep, though all should be changed; that there would be those who should be alive and remain to the coming of the Lord. He would have been surprised indeed to have heard "we must all die" cited as a self-evident certitude. "If our earthly house be dissolved" is his thought. He knew that death was one of the enemies to be put under Christ's feet, and he could not tell how soon the victory might not come. The Church little knows what she has lost in forgetting this hope. She has made a pact with death, and been content that it should rob the earth of its noblest and best, and has not cried to the Lord of life to come to raise His sleeping saints, and change the living into the like image. Her testimony should have been that Christian faith met and supplied the craving of humanity; that Christ had overcome death, and not merely robbed it of its sting; that He would yet do more than reverse it—even swallow it up in victory. Her message of glad tidings is stunted without this clause; its absence has had much to do with that message's scant acceptance.

"If our earthly house be dissolved." Such words hardly strike a responsive chord in the minds of the young and strong. But you, old men worn with toil; you, aged women tottering with years; you, whose frames sickness is wasting, it can be no strange thought—

to you that you may have to put off this your tabernacle.* If it must be so, be sure that you have a better and more enduring habitation, a house prepared for you from heaven. See only that while your outward man perishes, your inward man is indeed renewed day by day. Glorious things are spoken of that body that shall be: let not the dweller be unworthy of the palace. Feed your spirits now with heavenly food—not with the "low-thoughted cares" of this passing world. "Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." And then He who giveth to every seed its own body will be able to invest you as He would wish. The likeness of Christ's glory shall pass upon you, because it has already appeared in you. "He that hath wrought us for this very thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

'We shall change our vile body.'

Philippians iii. 20, 21.

THE meditation of a passage like this will keep our thoughts within the circle of that great event to whose memory the weeks after Easter are consecrated.

The Apostle Paul has been speaking, with tears in his eyes, of some who were not walking worthily of the vocation wherewith they were called. He sums up their evil condition—in which their god is their belly, and their glory is in their shame—by saying that they “mind earthly things.” That is, the thoughts they think, the emotions they indulge, the aims they set before themselves and follow, breathe this world’s atmosphere and obey its attraction. “But our conversation” (he says) “is”—normally, ideally is—“in heaven.”

Attention has often been drawn to the fact that St. Paul uses here a word (*πολιτευμα*) importing the life of citizens in a city. I think indeed we should err if we were to substitute “citizenship” for “conversation” as its English rendering. It is not so much of the Christian *standing* that the Apostle is speaking, as of the walk and habit of those who have that standing. This is truly our “conversation,”—which means our ‘turning about one with another. But the force of the original word seems to be this,—that the meeting and

mixing which, "one with another", implies, is no mere voluntary association, no accidental coming in contact of independent individuals, but the common life of a society, the ordered intercourse of a polity. Not in separateness, but in the unity of Christ's Body, are we seated in the heavenly places in Him. It is as *the Church* that our conversation is there,—as children of Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all,—as those who are come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and have its name written upon them, and its fellowship living within them. To the Christian life we are "called *in one body*."* We cannot live it aright if we live to self, even to the spiritual self. It is only truly realised as we widen to brotherhood in proportion as we rise to sonship; and our real love for Him that begat is measured by our love for every one that is begotten of Him.

This is our "conversation"; and of it the Apostle says that it is—or "subsists" (*ὑπάρχει*)—: heaven. His meaning appears from the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Colossians. "If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on" (*φρονεῖτε, mind*, as in Phil. iii. 19) "the things which are above, not on the things on the earth"—the earthly things, which those others minded. Christ, he seems to say, ascended because He rose. The new life in which He emerged from the grave sought the heavenly places as its fitting home. We who are risen with Him should also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell. Our seeking should be to the work He there works,

the worship He there offers. Such thoughts and affections, such habit and temper, as befit the court of the heavenly King,—as be seem those who consort with angels, and are preparing to be the Bride of the King's Son,—must be ours. We are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. Our life is now fed by secret springs: it is “hid with Christ in God.” But there comes a time for the manifestation of the sons of God. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.”

The same association of thought appears in the passage before us. “Our conversation is in heaven,”—that is the truth for this present time. But the attitude of our converse is one of expectation:—“we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” The word “Saviour” is emphatic. We look for, as Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (comp. Heb. ix. 28). And the salvation He brings is this,—the changing of our body. Now He saves us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. But though we have this first-fruits of the Spirit, we yet wait, in groaning and travailing, for the redemption of our body, the transformation of this earthly tabernacle into our house from heaven.* Unto this salvation He appears the second time to them that look for Him. It is part of His work of subduing all things to Himself,—wrought by the same energy and after the same manner. It is a further step towards realising the heavenly conversation, and bringing about

the time when the metropolis which dominates the earth shall be the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

Jesus Christ the Lord shall at His coming alter the fashion of the body of our humiliation, that it may become conformed to the body of His glory. This is the literal rendering of the words. It is not said that He shall change the substance of our bodies, but their form and fashion,—the mode of their existence and the laws of their operations. He Himself is the type of the change; and with Him there was no substitution of new material. His flesh saw no corruption. It even retained the nail-prints of hands and feet, and the open spear-wound of the side. It was flesh and bones still, such as no spirit has; but under new conditions. It could pass through closed doors. It was ordinarily (so it would appear) invisible to the natural eye, and only seen from time to time during the forty days which preceded the Ascension.* One element in its "glory" seems to be that it is no longer subject to physical laws. Our subjection thereto is a part of our humiliation; it binds us to earth when we would soar to heaven. So in us, as in Himself, the bodily fashion shall be changed: and we too shall be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Yet this is but a small part of the change and the conforming here in question. It is largely discoursed of by the Apostle Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. The Lord had said of His own death and resurrection—"Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it

* 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7.

bringeth forth much fruit." And so His servant reasons. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead." The seed must perish, that the plant may grow up; and the fashion of the plant is other than that of the seed. So, this flesh and blood of ours cannot, as they are, inherit the kingdom of God:—we shall not indeed all sleep, but we shall all be changed. And the change is this:—"it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." This body of our humiliation is a corruptible thing. Its life is one long warfare with death. That enemy besets it at every point,—entering by the breaches of injury, attacking it openly by disease, sapping it more surely if more secretly by decay. At last we give up the unequal struggle; and corruption asserts its unquestioned rights. Our body is also tainted with "dishonour." We clothe it in shame of its nakedness. With a half protest we take the care necessary for its well-being and seemliness. It links us in uncomfortable alliance with the brutes, and too often by its propensities degrades us to their level. Last, it subsists in "weakness." It has no strength to rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy. Its feebleness necessitates the spending nearly half of our time in the unconsciousness of sleep and the animal employment of eating. It will cast us into slumber even in the watch of Gethsemane, because, though the spirit be willing, the flesh is so weak. In the resurrection all this shall be changed. This corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. Dishonour shall have passed into

glory, and weakness into power. In this tabernacle the frail shittim-wood of our nature needs to be covered with the brass of God's strength, to become the altar of acceptable sacrifice. In the temple the altar is all of brass.

The Apostle sums up the contrast by saying—"It is sown a natural ($\psi\chi\kappa\delta\sigma\nu$, soulish) body, it is raised a spiritual body." This requires explanation. And therefore he goes on—"There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written 'The first man Adam was made a living soul.'" That the first man was made a living soul shews that his body must have been a "soulish" body. That is, it was a body suited to the soulish, or natural life. Man's immaterial part is represented in Scripture as twofold, soul and spirit. The soul is the seat of the common understanding and emotions,—of those qualities in which we differ in degree only from animals. But the spirit of man is the inmost recess of self-conscious personality, of abstract reason, and of determinate will,—the possession of which makes him a moral being, formed after God's likeness. It is the holy of holies of his nature, capable of communion with his Maker, and fitted for His habitation. Such a spirit God breathed into man's nostrils in the day of his creation. But the body framed from the dust of the ground was not its ultimate dwelling place, and therefore not its fittest exponent. Man thus coming into existence was a soul rather than a spirit. It needed God's education to awake the human, lying dormant in the animal, to elicit the response of spirit to Spirit. When He has prevailed to do this, then He who gives to every seed its own body will give a framework suitable to this being also. There is a spiritual body, as there is a

soulish body,—a body fitted to express the life of man's spirit as this is to the life of his soul. The soulishness of the present body is a hindrance to the higher life as it is an advantage to the lower; and we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. Not, however, that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon with our house from heaven,—even with that spiritual body which shall be given us at the Lord's appearing. The earthly house of this tabernacle may be dissolved,—taken to pieces and put away: but we know that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

It is in Christ that the human spirit attains its true life; and it is in Christ that it has received its fitting body. On that Easter morning God brought forth a new Man, one in whom He had breathed the Spirit of life with a higher result. In the first Adam man had become a living soul: in the last Adam he was a quickening spirit. Not first was the spiritual, but the natural (soulish); and afterwards the spiritual. "The first man was of the earth, earthy ($\chiοικός$, dusty): the second man is of heaven.* As is the earthly ($\chiοικός$), such are they also that are earthly; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne" (and do bear) "the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." In the first Adam we have the life of the soul in the natural body, which is of the dust of the earth, and unto dust must return. In the second Adam, by the new birth, we have the life of the spirit; and shall one day live it aright in a spiritual

* Revised version. The reference to the resurrection rather than the incarnation is thus for the first time brought out.

body, of heavenly origin, immortal, incorruptible, of energy inexhaustible, like unto His.

Thus is filled in in detail the outline contained in the words of our text—"We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." If this were the only blessing of His coming, we might well walk in expectation of it. We are now like those criminals of old who were chained to a corpse. The body is dead because of sin, while the spirit is life because of righteousness. The best thing we can do with it now is to hold it in death, to beat it under, and keep it in subjection. But the time comes when our burden shall be made our help-meet. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." The Christ in us shall no longer witness in sackcloth, but shall clothe itself with the beautiful garments which are its proper vesture.

And this change is "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." It is a step in the progress of His mediatorial kingdom, a trophy of His triumph who goes forth conquering and to conquer. God has put all things under His feet, and set Him at His right hand until His enemies be made His footstool. The enmity which He is to subdue stands in sin, and in death which came through sin. He must reign, till He has put all opposition thence arising under His feet, till He has put down all rule and all authority and power. Now His work is to meet with the enmity as it is in man's spirit—to quicken it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. And so even in this life the exhorta-

tion can go forth to the baptized—"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you." Thanks be to God, who everywhere leadeth us about in triumph in Christ, willing captives running by His chariot-wheels to attest His victory! This is the first-fruits of the Spirit, which even now we have. But God, who gave it us, has prepared us for something more; and He hath promised us that for which He has fashioned us. He will swallow up death in this victory of His. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed; and Christ must reign on His mediatorial throne till this foe also is trodden under foot. He will first abolish it in the bodies of His saints in the first resurrection. And then shall come the end, when the rest of the dead live again, and all of them—small and great—stand before God, and death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire, and death is no more, for the former things are passed away. Resurrection is according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. It is a manifestation of Christ the Redeemer, Christ the Renewer. It is the outcome of His work in the spirits of men hitherto: it is the beginning of His future work in all the outward creation. The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, for the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of God's children. The "Behold I make all things new" embraces man's habitation as well as his being. It

results in regeneration now: it is to be manifested in resurrection ere long: and then it shall produce the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly: and rejoice even with joy and singing." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."*

Seeing, then, that we look for such things, how can our conversation be otherwhere than in heaven? It is not for us to mind earthly things, but to seek those things which are above. How shall we make a god of our belly,—serving our own appetites and lusts? how shall we glory in that which is our shame, when we look for a Saviour to change the very body which links us to earth and earthly things? "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them." "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."† That we are risen with Christ means that we are to realise even now this life of the world to come. It will be our entire emancipation from the animal; our development

* Isaiah xi. 6, 9.

† Luke xx. 34-36.

into the truly human, which is the image of God.* Only by such emancipation, by such development, can we prove that we are something more than advanced apes, can we witness to the inspiration which effected the word "Let us make man." Science has never heard that word. It is in vain that theology thunders it into his ear, unless it can point to the facts corresponding. The natural man is only too like an animal. But the resurrection life, now begun, hereafter completed, manifests that for which no evolution will account, and witnesses for God in the midst of His universe. Live we it, then, for His glory as well as for our own blessing. Move we upward, "working out the beast." Engage we ourselves in the noble politics of the heavenly city. And look we out therefrom continually for Him who would conform us wholly unto Himself, that in body and in spirit we may indeed be in God's image, because in His who is the

" Brightness of the Immortal Father's face,
Most holy, heavenly, blessed,
True Son of God, in whom His truth and grace
Are visibly expressed."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

“It is expedient for you that I go away.”

James i. 17-21. John xvi. 5-15.

THERE was a good gift, and a perfect gift, which as at this time was about to come down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableress, neither shadow of turning. That gift was His Holy Spirit. So good and so perfect was the gift, that it made up—and more than made up—for the departure of the Lord Jesus Himself. *“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.”*

Is it, then, that the presence of the Spirit is better than that of the Son? Does He hold a higher place in the Godhead, or shed richer blessings upon men? Not so. *“In this Trinity none is afore or after other: none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together: and co-equal.”* Nor do the words of the promise admit of the thought that the Father's gift of His Spirit is separate from and better than His gift of His Son. *“When the Spirit is come . . . He shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.”* The expediency of Christ's going away lies not in this, therefore, that by so doing He gives place to one better than Himself.

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ: He is to us what He is because Christ is what He is. "The measure of the Spirit is the measure of Christ, even as the measure of Christ is the measure of God. "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

So again we ask the question—why was it expedient for us that Christ should go away, that the Spirit might come unto us? It must surely be that the Spirit can show us the things of Christ better than Christ Himself could shew them; that He can bring us nearer to Christ than Christ Himself could bring us. Does this seem strange? Yet has it not been so in fact? Who ever knew Christ better, lived by Him more entirely, than St. Paul? Yet he knew Him only by the Spirit. God revealed His Son in him* even as He reveals Him in each baptized child.† None of those who companied together all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them *saw* Christ more truly than St. Paul saw Him. And for these themselves—do we not feel what a stride in advance they had made after the Day of Pentecost in the knowledge of Christ? It was not when he lay in Jesus' bosom that St. John learnt the heavenly wisdom which shines out from his Gospel and Epistles. Or, if he learnt it then, it was as it were written in invisible ink, and only the Spirit's operation made the characters appear. If Christ had remained on earth, they might have known Him after the flesh, but this would have been all, or nearly all. He withdrew Himself from sight and sense, that the knowledge of Him after the spirit might be unmixed and un-

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

impeded. "Touch me not," He said to Mary in the garden "for I am not yet ascended to my Father." "Because thou hast seen me" was His word to Thomas. "thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Yea, blessed are they. We speak of it sometimes as one of the joys of the kingdom that there faith shall be lost in sight; and we mean a true thing when we say it. But it would have been no blessing at all if the sight, instead of crowning faith at the end, had taken its place from the beginning. Faith is the spirit's vision; and it is better for us that we should look with our spirit, than with our eye. Better—as bringing a higher part of our nature into action, and so developing and strengthening it: better—as giving us a truer perception of that on which we gaze. "The flesh profiteth nothing." What would it avail us if we knew Christ as a dog knows its master, or a baby his mother? Should we know Him as He is, and in such knowledge would there stand eternal life? The desire to touch the one we love is natural, but it is not spiritual: it is of the lower not of the higher nature in us. The desire to look upon beloved faces is something loftier: we want hereby to get at the soul through the windows of the eyes. But there is even a human love which can subsist without these: which feeds not upon looks and caressings, but lives by the communion of soul with soul when the sense lends nothing in aid. When we see such a love, as in those whom duty separates or whom death has divided, we recognise the highest form it is capable of assuming. Shall Christ our Lord have any love less exalted than this? He would not be content without it, and that for our sakes as well as His own. No love which is not rooted in spirit can

endure for ever ; and unless we can love Him with an everlasting love we cannot share in His kingdom.

So then—that we may know Him, not as He appears only, but as He is : that we may love Him, not for what we get from Him, but for Himself—Christ has gone away, and sent His Spirit in His place. But it need not always be thus. When love, through self-denial, has grown pure and strong : when the vision of faith is perfect, and the outward has become needless, and the spiritual the only reality,—then the expediency of the Lord's absence shall exist no longer. He who as at this time lingered yet forty days with His own ere He tore Himself away,—He shall come again. No fear then of knowing Him only after the flesh. The Spirit by whom we have learnt Him now shall still be the light in which we see Him then. But to behold His smile, to hear His voice ! Could we live, did we not hope for this with our dear ones who have gone before, however unchanging be our love while they are absent ? Let us seek that Christ our Lord be not less dear to us, His absence less felt, His presence less longed for, “whom not having seen we love : in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

“ **H**e shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.”

John xvi. 12-15.

WHEN the Lord Jesus, Himself about to depart from this world, promised the Comforter to His disciples, He spoke of three things which that blessed Spirit should

perform. First: "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Secondly: "He shall teach you all things: He shall guide you into all truth." Thirdly: "He shall show you things to come." It has been well pointed out (by the late Dean Alford) that we have the main fulfilment of this promise in the New Testament Scriptures. In the holy Gospels we see how the Spirit brought to remembrance the things which Jesus said and did. This description applies not only to the Gospels of Matthew and John, who were themselves present at the scenes they narrate, but also in those of Mark and Luke. For the tradition of the Church unhesitatingly ascribes the Gospel of St. Mark to the desire to embody the recollections of St. Peter: and St. Luke describes his own narrative as "a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word." The Gospels, inspired of the Holy Ghost, are thus memoirs, that is, memories. The Epistles, by the inspiration of the same Spirit, are teachings of all things, and guidance into all truth. And last, one who has at another time been inspired to recollection in a Gospel, and to the teaching of truth in Epistles, is in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and for us is shewn things to come.

In all these things, moreover, the Spirit is fulfilling that other characteristic of His mission—"He shall not speak of Himself: He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The things brought to remembrance in the Gospel are the things which Jesus said and did: the truth taught in the Epistles is the truth as it is in Jesus: the Apocalyptic shewing of

things to come is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus we may say of the Scriptures of the new covenant what He Himself said of those of the old—"they are they which testify of me."

Wonderful, indeed, has been the testimony they have borne to Him,—potent out of all proportion to their seeming characters. A few fragments of three years of a golden life: some letters of five obscure men addressed to communities or individuals among their followers: a series of visions seen by one of these men while in ecstasy on a desert island—so literary criticism would estimate the New Testament Scriptures. Yet by means of these simple writings the Spirit has shaken the world. They have been rendered into the tongue of well-nigh every nation under heaven; and by them to millions of faithful souls in all ages Christ has been shewn. Let us cherish them: let us know them by heart and by head, that they may make us, as their fellows of the Old Testament made Timothy, wise unto salvation.

In the New Testament Scriptures, then,—in Gospels, Epistles, and Apocalypse,—is seen the main fulfilment of those promises concerning the Spirit, of His bringing to remembrance, of His guidance into truth, of His shewing things to come. But only partially do they fulfil, however truly they answer to, that farther promise—"He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." "The Bible, and the Bible only" may be "the religion of the Protestants;" but the religion of the Catholic Church is a much wider thing. The Church of the New Testament was before its Scriptures; and the Spirit who indwelt her shewed Christ otherwise than by writings. Consider the holy sacraments. What depth of significance, what wealth of instruction

is contained in Baptism, in the Lord's Supper, in the Laying on of Hands, as Christ has ordained them, and as the Church by the Holy Ghost has received and ordered them. How much they tell us of Christ, and of God, whose fulness Christ hath. Then contemplate the Church's worship. If Christ be the only way to the Father, and the worship of the Church her access to God through Him, then that worship is just a development of Christ, and shews Christ. Nor less in the organization of the Church, in the architecture of the Temple He indwells, does the Spirit shew of Christ to us. The place and work of apostles and angels, of priests and deacons: the diverse functions of elder and prophet and evangelist and pastor—are manifestations of Christ, who fulfils all these ministries, and in whom they all consist and have their being. Thus by the Church is made known to men and angels the manifold wisdom of God. If we should search the Scriptures because they testify of Him, so we should seek to learn Him by studying the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

And as the eye sees only that it brings with it the faculty of seeing, the same Spirit who shews of Christ to us gives us to perceive that which is shewn. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God", and so we are born of water and the Spirit, that as new creatures we may be able to behold the new creation. The eye thus given He endows with the higher measures of perception by the unction from the Holy One, whereby we know all things. Only by this Spirit of regeneration and anointing within us can either the Scriptures or the Church profit us, and shew us Christ. There are blessed times when by His operation our hearts burn within us, while Christ

talks to us by the way, and opens to us the Scriptures; when He is known to us in the breaking of bread, and we almost seem to burst the veil of earthly things, and to look upon Him face to face. They are foretastes of that which shall be, first-fruits and earnest of the open vision, of the full communion. Their glow may die away like the flush of sunset. But the forms of the truth are still around us, and the Spirit is in them and in us, and day by day as we use them aright He is fashioning Christ upon us and forming Christ in us. And the day hastens greatly when His work shall have been accomplished: when the words He has inspired and the ordinances He has informed shall be needed no more, for so perfectly will He have shewn of Christ to us that we shall know even as we are known.

“*We shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

IN promising the Comforter to His disciples, our Lord spoke mainly of what that blessed Spirit should be to them, and in them. But He added certain words concerning a work to be done upon the world, rather than upon these whom He had chosen out of the world. The words are in this day’s gospel: they are these—

“*When the Comforter is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*”*

To "reprove," here, is not barely to blame. It is to convince, or, better still, to convict. It is that operation of the Spirit, which, as by a lightning-flash, penetrates and reveals the recesses of the heart, refuting all self-justification, demonstrating God's truth and man's lie. The word which convicts may be, generally is, spoken by human lips; but the power is of the Holy Ghost. Such conviction He came to bring to a world lying in darkness. And the matter of the inward revelation was to be threefold,—sin, righteousness, and judgment.

1. Truly the world at that time needed to be convinced of sin. The Jew desired a sign, and the Greek sought after wisdom: but neither knew the plague of his own heart, and longed for a Redeemer. The Greek knew nothing of sin. Crime he could understand, and vice; that is, he knew what it was to offend society, and to fall short of his own ideal. But no vision of a holy God had come before him, to strike into ill-doing the shame of guilt, and to invite the heart to repentance. The Jew indeed knew what sin was, and recognised it readily enough in the publicans and the harlots. But for himself he thanked God that he was not as other men were. The very Law which was given to bring sin to light he used as an occasion of glorying; "it was given" he said "to enhance the merit of Israel."

* The first thing to be done was to shake down these refuges of lies. To Jew and Greek alike the Spirit brought conviction that they were under sin. And the proof of their sin was this, that they believed not on Him whom God had sent. To One so altogether lovely every faithful heart must have responded with alacrity. Yet He was in the world—the world that was made by Him—and it knew Him not. He came

unto His own, and His own received Him not. It is condemnation already—*ipso facto*—to have believed not on the name of the only begotten Son of God. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. He that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his deeds shpuld be *reproved*.”* It is the same word as here—lest they should be convicted of their evil.

2. But then upon the conviction of sin was to follow that of *righteousness*. All had sinned, and come short of the glory of God. But there was that which should make up the failure, if men would but receive it. God had a righteousness for them, exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, exceeding the conceptions of Gentile moralists. It was the righteousness which is of God by *faith*. It was to come out of trust in a Redeemer seen no more by the eye of *sense*: it was to be inwrought by a Spirit sent by that Redeemer from the Father to whom He had gone. “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” Of such righteousness the law had testified; and the conscience had borne witness to it, as the thoughts of men accused and excused in turn. Now the Spirit was to convict the world of its want, to convince it of its need, and to impart it after a manner which no law could develop, in a fulness for which no conscience could constrain.

3. Finally, to those convinced of sin and righteousness the Spirit was to bring the sense of *judgment*. Not some far-off assize, wherat at the last day the wicked should be punished, and the righteous (especially

* John iii. 19, 20.

if of Israel) rewardell: nor some sentence of Miros and Rhadamanthus in the place of shades,—but a present, living thing. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged"; because the Son of God had come to destroy the works of the devil, and to reveal from heaven the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The whole world was lying in the evil one, and needed for its deliverance to see its prince condemned and vanquished. Then it saw that One stronger than he had come; and that God's judgments were in the earth, that the inhabitants of the world might learn righteousness.

That we bear the Christian name, means that we have acknowledged the Church's testimony concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment. Have we also, each one for himself, received consciously the Spirit's conviction of these things? If so, we are of the world no longer: but of those who are chosen out of the world to inherit the kingdom of God.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

“Pure Religion and undefiled.”

St. JAMES says—“If any man among you seemeth to be” that is, thinketh himself to be “religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

This word “religion” has been sometimes misunderstood. It has been thought to bear its modern sense as including the whole sphere of man’s relation to God. And so it has been said,—Observe how St. James places all religion in morality. He ignores creeds and sacraments, he passes by opinions and sentiments: the religion pure and undefiled which he inculcates is the active work of charity and the passive freedom from worldly spot. He would have applauded the poet’s saying:—

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight :
He can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.”

Now this St. James certainly does not mean. The word he uses expresses only the outward and ceremonial part of the God-worship life of man. “Religion” also meant this at the time when our translation of the Scriptures was made; and this was its meaning in the

Latin language from which it is taken. The Roman's "feligio" was the whole range of observance as towards the gods to which he was bound; and this is what St. James intends. Let no man think himself fulfilling this duty, he says, who is not keeping his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile. The service of this God who is our God does not consist in "sacrifice and offering, but in doing His will. The *cultus* of His faith, the worship of His temple, is moral goodness. It is not indeed the whole of Christianity, ~~but~~ the outside only. Yet the outside is itself precious; and the Tabernacle must have its enclosure of fine white linen as well as its contents of gold and silver furniture.

This is a truth which none need to remember more than such as ourselves, to whom the forms of religion are present in great richness and variety. We must ever feel that these do not *constitute* the true service of God's temple, but express it only. When St. Paul beseeches us, by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service, he does not mean—"offer in your daily worship a prayer of dedication." It is well that we should so utter our burnt-offering, and we rightly plead his injunction in doing so; but it is only the utterance, and not the substance. It is well that the worship should embody the life; but the great thing is that there be the life for the worship to embody. So when St. Peter writes—"To whom coming, as to a living stone . . . ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"—the "house" he means is not the church building, and the "spiritual sacrifices" are not the

services that are held there. We are priests that we may offer to God ourselves—all that we are and all that we do: it is a joy to feel that in fulfilling our commonest duties we need not look earthward on the toil, but may stand facing God-ward, holding up to Him our being and working in grateful offering. Such sacrifices are acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ, in whom we live and by whom we act. In Him their failings are lost in perfectness, their ideal is reached and their promise fulfilled. And here also our word is, "Of Thine own gifts only can we give to Thee." We are nothing but as God worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. But what by the grace of God we are, that will we render unto Him. To do good and to distribute we will forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. We will stand ever at His altar of burnt-offering, presenting the slain lamb of our bodies dead because of sin, with the meat offering of our minds and the drink offering of our spirits: giving them in sacrifice, because exercising them in work and looking to God as we do so. As this is effected, so its expression in the worship of the sanctuary becomes also acceptable. "*Then* shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,—with burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar."

The First-fruits of the Harvest of the Earth.

Rev. xiv. 1-5.

It is well that from time to time we should consider those great future events for which we look, reviewing

all that we know concerning them, weighing any recent additions to our knowledge, and seeking to make our conceptions regarding them both ~~full~~ and accurate. Let us consider to-day the subject of the first-fruits, as it is brought before us in the portion of scripture appointed for our Evening Service.

When the Lord Jesus was upon earth, delivering the word of God, He represented Himself in so doing as a Sower who had come forth to sow His seed. In one parable He exhibits the varying results of this sowing, according to the nature of the soil into which the seed falls.* But in another His vision extends to the far end of that which had now begun.† As the beginning of the Christian age was a sowing, so its end should be a harvest. Men had been the sowers, but the angels should be the reapers. In that day every ear of corn which had grown up from the good seed sown by the Son of man in the field of the world should be gathered into the garner of God. The tares which the enemy had sown among them should be rooted out; and the righteous should shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

So far and no farther the Lord Jesus instructed us while here on earth. He spoke to Jews, among whom a first-fruits always preceded the harvest. But He said nothing of a corresponding occurrence in that harvest which is the end of the world. He did not exclude it, but He did not teach it. Accordingly, the epistles of the Apostles, much as they speak of the coming of the Lord and of our gathering unto Him, say nothing of the distinction between the presentation of a first-fruits and the subsequent reaping of the

whole harvest-field. The two are regarded as one act. But now came the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to His servants; and which He sent and signified unto His servant John, who bare record of all things that he saw. Amongst these things was the reaping of the harvest of the earth.* But not long before this, as part of the same vision, he had seen a holy company standing on the Mount Sion with a Lamb as it had been slain, and had been told—“These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” His thoughts must immediately have gone back to the well-known ordinance of the Law, directing the presentation of a sheaf of first-fruits before the Lord, with an he-lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering.† From this time forth it became part of the revealed truth of God, that the harvest which is the end of the world should have its first-fruits. And if the harvest is the ingathering of all whom the seed sown by the Son of man has produced, then its first-fruits must be the prior taking of some of these, few in proportion to the whole, to be presented before the Lord with the Lamb whom they have followed.

It was no new thing, then, which was delivered to our faith when, early in this work of the Lord, the word of prophecy began to speak to us of the first-fruits. But it was the first time that it became a hope set before the Church. The sacred book which speaks of it had fallen into neglect and disuse; and there was so little thought that the harvest of the earth was near, that few cared to enquire who and what were its first-fruits. If, moreover, the matter was looked into, it

* Rev. xiv. 14,16.

† Lev. xxiii. 9-12.

was seen that the 144,000 so called in Scripture had been brought into distinctness at a particular time—after the opening of the sixth seal, by a ~~special~~ messenger—an angel from the east, and by a definite act—their sealing ~~on~~ their foreheads. Nothing answering to these things were seen in the Church, nor could their meaning be understood. and so the truth lay dormant and hidden. But to us God's workings came to interpret His word. Our eyes were opened to see in the shakings and changes which were around us the fulfilment of the symbols of the sixth seal, as well as the signs which our Lord Himself had given as those of His own coming.* In the apostleship which He then sent before Him into His Church we saw unmistakeably the angel from the east,—the herald of the rising of the Sun of righteousness. And ere long it appeared plainly that that angel had the seal of the living God, when by the laying on of Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given as of old, and we were sealed with the earnest of our inheritance.† Now indeed the first-fruits might be prepared; for occasion and messenger and act were there. We already believed the time of harvest to be near; and now to be of its first-fruits became our living hope and expectation.

We, then, who have received Apostles and their sealings, are the persons on whom rests the calling of being the first-fruits of the harvest of the earth. It belongs to all, living and departed, who are Christ's at His coming, to be gathered in at that great harvesting,—to be raised or changed in the first resurrection, and enter into glory a thousand years before the rest of

* Matt. xxiv. 29-31; Luke xxi. 25-27. † Eph. i. 13, 14; Acts xix. 1-8.

the dead live again.* But within this blessed company there is a special privilege of certain of the ears of corn which are earliest ripe. And this is, that they be gathered into a sheaf ere yet the Reaper puts in His sickle, and be laid up before the Lord in His holy place. The advantage of this priority is not so much a gain of time, as an escape from positive harm and peril. It is revealed that this dispensation shall end in a time of trouble, an hour of temptation, a period of fierce persecution of all who bear the name of Christ. From the trial of these last weeks (as it were) before harvest—from the danger of being scorched by the sun, withered by the blight, or prostrated by the tempest—the first-fruits are free. They stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion while the great tribulation rages below. That theirs will be no selfish security, we are sure; that, they will therefrom be helpers and saviours to their brethren in the midst of the fires, we know. But secure they are, from death, temptation, and apostasy: and the trouble which is without is to them as to “those who listen in safety to the sound of the distant storm.”

What will be the *condition* of the first-fruits at this time before their brethren of the harvest are gathered to them, we know not. We may guess—we may even hope—that it will be in the changed body, free from all the leaven of this mortality. We may hope that it will not be alone that we shall stand upon the Mount of God; but that with us there will be our departed brethren who have died in the hope in which we have lived, clothed upon like ourselves with the house from heaven. But we know nothing assuredly; nor need we speculate about it. Our calling is plain,

our hope clear. Our only concern is to make our calling and election sure, that our hope fail not of its fruition, and that we lose not our crown.

For not all who are called are also chosen. It is the calling of all the baptized, as such, to be of those blessed and holy ones who have part in the first resurrection. But it is sadly plain that there will be many in that day who will be found to have come short of this their proffered prize.* And so to be of the first-fruits is not the *destiny* of the sealed. It is their calling, and will be theirs if they abide faithful. If they ripen not in their place, how shall the High Priest but pass them sorrowfully by, when He comes to gather His sheaf? To ripen is to grow up in all things as from the good seed sown by the Son of man. The work which the Lord is doing by His Apostles is only so to mature us sooner. Through it the Holy Ghost shines with intenser sunshine and refreshes with heavier dew, that the ears from green may become golden, and be ready to be plucked. Let us so ripen. First in grace, and then in gifts; first in what belongs to us in common with all the baptized, and then in what is especially ours as the sealed. We must grow into common goodness before we can develop special qualities of beauty or use. O for the being unblameable and un-reprovable; for the heart which condemns us not, that so we may have confidence towards God! Then without hindrance we can grow into His holy purpose, and shew forth His perfect mind, and so at the last attain to the rich reward laid up for us.

Let us indeed watch and pray, that we may escape the things which are coming upon the earth, and stand before the Son of man.

ASCENSION DAY.

The entry of the high priest into the holiest.

We began during the Holy Week to meditate upon the rites of the great day of Atonement, as typical of the work of our Saviour Christ on our behalf. In the high priest performing on that day, alone and unassisted, all the sacred offices, we saw Jesus by Himself purging our sins. In the morning sacrifice of burnt-offering we beheld the type of that which is written—"When He cometh into the world He saith, Lo! I come, to do Thy will, O God." The high priest divesting himself of his garnments for glory and for beauty, and putting on robes of plain white linen, was seen to signify the Incarnation; when He who was in the form of God emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant. The presentation of the sin-offering answers to His death because of sin. In the high priest offering the bullock for himself, as well as the goat for the people, we tried to gain some insight into that wonderful mystery of the identification of the Son of God with us in our infirmity; of His suffering, being tempted; of His perfecting by such sufferings. In the slaying of the sin-offering at the door of the tabernacle we saw His giving Himself to death, His priestly offering of His broken body and shed blood to the Father, as solemnly signified by act and word on the night before He suffered. His actual immolation at the hands of

others we were led to see and understand in the burning of the bodies of the beasts without the camp, as ~~to~~ communicate and accursed. While for the darkest hour of His Passion we had to go to the type of the scape-goat. Laden with the sins of the people, delivered over to Satan, banished into utter loneliness—the scape-goat set forth the horror of great darkness, the coming of the prince of this world, the seeming forsaking of man and of God. But then the light shines again, and we hear the “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” The evil ones flee the Cross, ashamed; and, spoiling principalities and powers, He makes a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

And now this day we may lift our eyes from the outer court of earth, and behold our great High Priest as He ascends to the heavenly sanctuary, and to the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. “Christ is entered, not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” And again—“Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats or calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”† This is the aspect in which our Lord’s ascension is regarded in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In His death He became the sin-offering for the whole world. In His resurrection God said unto Him, “Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee,” and thereby glorified Him to be an High Priest for ever, after the

* Col. ii. 14, 15.

† Heb. viii. 1, 2; ix. 11, 12: 24.

order of Melchizedec.* And when, forty days afterward, the risen One passed through the blue veil of heaven, and vanished from our sight, we know that this was the entrance of our High Priest into the Holiest, to appear before the throne of grace, in the presence of God for us.

“With Thine offering Thou hast entered in
Within the veil, to make an end of sin.”

The high priest took with him the incense and the blood. The meaning of the incense is conveyed to us in one of the visions of the Apocalypse:—

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”† Incense, therefore, is something added to the prayers of the saints, which causes them to go up with acceptance before God. As we say when we plead this act of the Angel and Mediator of the new covenant—

“So shall the words of our mouth, and the meditations
of our heart
Be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our strength and
our Redeemer.”

The incense which perfumes the prayers of all saints is the intercession with which they are offered to God by His beloved Son, in whom He is ever well-pleased. And so the antitype of the offering of incense by the high priest is declared in the words, “He is able to

* Heb. v. 4-6. Acts, xiii. 33.

† Rev. viii. 3, 4.

save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,
seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

"Thou standest at the altar,
Thou offerest every prayer,
In faith's unclouded vision
We see Thee ever there.
Out of Thy hand the incense
Ascends before the Throne,
Where Thou art interceding,
Lord Jesu, for Thine own."

The same Book of Revelation shows us also in what manner our High Priest has entered into the Holiest with His own blood:—"In the midst of the throne, and of the living creatures, and of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."†

As a Lamb, once slain, but now revived from death, does Christ appear in the presence of God for us. He is thus the continual memorial of His own Sacrifice, offered once for all. And He is its memorial; not its repetition. The blood had no propitiatory efficacy in itself, but drew all its value from the death in which it was shed. The carrying of the blood into the holiest place, and the sprinkling it before the mercy seat, was but an extension, so to speak—a carrying onward and forward of the sacrifice already offered in the outer court. So Christ appearing, a Lamb once slain, as our Advocate with the Father, is the Propitiation for our sins;‡ but is so because once on earth He made the propitiation which now He continually represents.

We know that that memorial of His Sacrifice which Christ makes in heaven, His Church makes on earth in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. What is true

* Heb. vii. 25.

† Ch. v. 6.

‡ 1 John iii. 1, 2.

of the one, therefore, must be true also of the other. Now much question has been raised as to whether the sacrifice we offer in the Eucharist is truly and properly propitiatory. The answer comes from what has just been seen regarding our Lord's appearance in the presence of God for us. Either is propitiatory, not for what it is in itself, but for what it commemorates. The memorial which He makes in heaven and His Body makes on earth derives all its prevailing efficacy from the one Sacrifice once offered upon the cross, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

It is further said of the sacrifice in the Eucharist that it is not a sin-offering, but a thank-offering. This also seems to be true. Therein we "offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord." But how then do we show in it the Lord's death? How are we imaging that heavenly thing whereof the Law had a shadow in the sprinkling of the blood in the holiest? Again the Apocalyptic vision supplies the answer. Behold the Lord showing His own death, the High Priest over the house of God presenting the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. But in so doing He appears, not as the bullock or goat of sin-offering, but as the lamb. Although the necessities of the case had brought the Lamb of God to a death, which was in its deepest reality as well as its outward form a sin-offering, yet it was the spirit of burnt-offering which upbore it and made it acceptable still.* The death unto sin is past; but the spirit of that death abideth ever, presenting it in memorial before the throne of God.

* See Fifth Sunday in Quadragesima.

And so neither here nor there "is the altar of God to be covered with tears, and groans, and blood of the worshippers, but to have upon it the memorial of the one worthy Victim once offered, and to have before it and around it a people offering thanksgivings to God,—thanksgivings full of wonder, and gratitude, and awe, and holy joy, and abounding hope."

So far Ascension carries us. But the day of Atonement opens a further vista still to the eye that would see in it the work of the great High Priest. That the blood which had been brought before the mercy-seat should also be carried forth, and sprinkled upon every part of the sacred enclosure,—this affords a lively image of the sending of the Holy Spirit to effect in men that which Christ had wrought for them. And we have already seen the meaning of the final emergence of the high priest from within the veil in the evening of the day.* It is that "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." It is the fulfilment of that promise of which we hear to-day:—"this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."† For this promise we wait. We do not indeed stand gazing up into heaven: we return from the Mount of Ascension to our work and labour. Yet, though we "occupy," it is only "till He comes." We do not so lose ourselves in the dust and din of the city, that we have no eye to the temple, no watchfulness for the time of evening sacrifice, when the High Priest shall re-appear in His garments for glory and for beauty, to bless His waiting people. If it is to them that look for Him that He

* See Second Sunday in Advent.

† Acts i. 11.

shall so appear, we will be of the number. We will "look for the Saviour; the Lord Jesus Christ; " * we will "walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." †

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

"Seated in the heavenly places in Christ."

WHEN the Lord Jesus was about to depart out of this world unto the Father, He spake thus unto His own whom He loved unto the end:—

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Now if He is the way, it must be that some are to tread it. If no man cometh to the Father but by Him, it implies that by Him any man may come. And so His ascension comes out of the sphere of the mere external. It is not merely God's reward to Him, and God's testimony in Him of His grace toward us. His ascension, like His resurrection, is to be reproduced in us. We are buried with Him by baptism into His death, that like as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. And now, risen with Christ, we are to seek those things which are above, where Christ

* John xiv. 2-6.

sitteth at the right hand of God. He went to the Father, that in Him we also might come,—might in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell. God hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In us, as in Him, the new man cannot dwell amid earthly things, but seeks its native air and its home-country.

We feed on His flesh and blood that these things may become a reality in us. We are exhorted to act them out, because they are wrought in us of God. Easter has said to us,—you are alive from the dead: live unto God. And now Ascension says,—you are seated in the heavenly places: let your conversation be characterized accordingly. What reverence, what purity, what humility should be ours who dwell for ever in God's sacred presence! Like His holy angels, can we but give ourselves continually to worship before His face, to ministration towards those that are His? Like His very Son Himself, our heavenly life must become one of sympathetic help,* of unwearying intercession;† and so, as He is, shall we be in this world. We know not what we shall be; but the life we lead in the Spirit here is a true earnest and foretaste of the life of the world to come. We do not anticipate in that any lack of innocent enjoyment; still less any check to the search after knowledge; still less any debarment from those lofty pleasures which imagination draws from the impressions of sense. Nor, therefore, are these other than consistent with the heavenly life now. The members of ours which are yet upon earth, and which we are to mortify, are

* Heb. ii. 17, 18; iv. 15, 16.

† Ibid. vii. 25.

not these, but uncleanness, and evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry.* Only let us live in the Spirit, and we shall not fulfil these lusts of the flesh, nor be imprisoned within the range of the natural; but shall live the life of the heavenly places, where God is all in all. Nor, again, is our work in this world incompatible with our heavenly life. Rightly done, it is but a form in which it manifests itself. It becomes glorified into God's service. We are His ministers therein, as truly as are the angels when they wield the elemental powers.

“Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine”

Let but the river of our lie flow strongly, and it shall not be lost in the sands of the petty details of daily existence, but shall make its wilderness rejoice and blossom as a rose. Amid its din our communion with God shall sing a perpetual undertone, and shall resolve its worst discords into harmony. All things are ours, if we are Christ's, as Christ is God's: ours richly to enjoy, ours profitably to use. From foes we will convert them to subjects: we will bring them to adorn the triumph of our Saviour. In them and by them we will live the heavenly life, the life which is hid with Christ in God, the life which with Him adores, and with Him serves.

This it is to be seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Only remember that He is the Ascender, as well as the Ascended: the Way thither first, and then the Life there. “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” It is not that an arbitrary appointment has made faith in Christ the only means of access to

the Holiest; but it is that we can only really come nearer to the Father by entering into the mind and spirit of His dear Son. Whither He has gone we know; and the way we know. What was the way by which Christ our Lord went unto His Father and our Father, unto His God and our God? It was the way of obedience, the way of the Cross; the way of renunciation of self, of death unto sin, of life unto God. Can we tread this way? We can if we are one with Him, for He is the way.

Therefore, indeed (since, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His), will we pray—"O God, the King of glory, who hast exalted Thy Son Jesus Christ with great triumph into heaven, we beseech Thee, send us Thy Holy Spirit, and exalt us unto that place whither our Saviour Christ hath gone before, for His sake."

**"The Vision is yet for an appointed time;
though it tarry, wait for it."**

In the interval between Christmas and Pentecost, the Church in her commemorations is (as it were) visiting the rock whence she was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence she was digged. And of all the scenes and events which crowd about her birthplace, there are few of deeper interest than that period of ten days in which her memory now lingers. The Son of man has ascended to the Father, but the Spirit has not yet come. It was only expedient that He should go away because, if He went not away, the Comforter could not come unto His disciples. But now He has gone away, and the Comforter has not come, and the

Church is left an orphan.* We are bidden to tarry at Jefusalem, until we receive the promise of the Father. But here we wait from day to day, and the promise is not fulfilled, and the unbelievers mock, and our mouths are closed and our hands bound, and we can show no reason for the hope that is in us. We must have another Apostle to fill up the number of the twelve; but there is no Divine Voice by which he may be called, and we must fain trust that God will guide aright the casting of a lot.

Such, perchance, may have been the impatient thought of more than one of that little company who as at this time were gathered at Jerusalem. Even now it may seem strange to many why the Spirit should not have been at once sent down by the ascended Saviour, and why such an interregnum should be found between the dispensations of God. Strange it may be; yet we find the explanation of it in the Law given to Israel of old. It was there ordained that on the second morning after the Passover a first-fruit of the harvest should be presented before the Lord, to be accepted for the people.† This type was fulfilled by our Lord in His own Person, when on the morrow after the sabbath He rose from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept,‡ and was accepted therein for our justification. But from this day the Law directs that fifty days shall be counted; and that on the fiftieth another first-fruits shall be offered,—this time in loaves, and baked with leaven. In strict accordance with this type, fifty days elapsed before the fulfilment of that word, "Because I live, ye shall live also." But when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, then came also the

Spirit of life from Christ Jesus, to beget by the word of truth a body, which should be a kind of first-fruits of God's creatures.* Not indeed without ~~heaven~~— still dwelling in mortal flesh; but truly dedicated to God in Christ its Head, and a pledge of the full harvest which shall accrue from the working whereby He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself.

This may explain why the Spirit came at Pentecost; and not before. But why the division of the fifty days into the forty and the ten? Why does the Lord remain forty days with His disciples ere He ascends to the Father,—forty days, no more and no less? Again we turn to the Law, and in one of its ordinances seem to find the ground of this number also. Forty days are to be counted by every woman after her child-bearing; and then she is to bring her thank-offering to the Lord in His house. And if her child be the first-born son, upon this day he is to be presented in the temple, for every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy unto the Lord.† We know how this ordinance was fulfilled by our Lord in the letter; and forty days after Christmas we commemorate His Presentation in the Temple. But on Easter Day He rises in a second birth: He is the First-begotten from the dead. And again forty days elapse—no more and no less—ere He goes up to His Father's House in the heavens,‡ there to be presented before His glory with exceeding joy.

At another time we might profitably follow this type into its future fulfilment. There again the woman brings forth her man-child, and the child is caught up to God and to His throne. This first-born of the Church's womb is the first-fruits unto God and the

* James i. 18.

† Luke ii. 22-39.

‡ John xiv. 2.

Lamb, and stands with the Lamb on Mount Sion, presented before Him there, delivered from the flesh, an unleavened sheaf indeed. Then from Mount Sion goes forth the power, and the two leavened loaves are seen—the Two Witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; and the harvest is prepared. But the history of the past has its lesson for the present as well as its prophecy of the future; and this lesson we do well at this time to learn.

How far does our attitude at this day resemble that of those hundred and twenty disciples, who waited from Ascension unto Pentecost? We indeed are not waiting for the promise of the Spirit. To that we look back, as a promise fulfilled. Eighteen hundred years ago we see the River of the water of life first entering the precincts of earth, and ever since flowing on into the garden which it makes from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Yet our faces are set forward and not backward: we are saved not by memory but by hope. We which have received the first-fruits of the Spirit yet groan and travail, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. If we come behind in no gift, we wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not stand gazing into heaven; yet we look for the promise that the same Jesus who has been taken from us into heaven shall so come again in like manner as He went into heaven. We are without the veil, like Israel on the day of Atonement, looking for our great High Priest to come forth in His garments for glory and for beauty, to bless His waiting people.

In this our expectation and longing, let us learn from

* Rev. xii. 1-5; xiv. 1-5, xi. 3; xiv. 14-16.

† Romans viii. 24.

those who at this time waited for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of Christ. We know not the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.* But we are sure that He knows them; that they are fixed and certain; that the day of the coming of the Lord has as definite a place as that day of Pentecost of old. The time seems to us long and weary. Year after year passes over us, and finds us still waiting; and hope deferred maketh the heart sick. Yet "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry;" and "he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." Only, when that day comes, let it find us also with one accord in one place,—in that one accord which is the mind of the Spirit and the communion of saints, in that one place which is the House of God, even the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

* Acts 1:7

